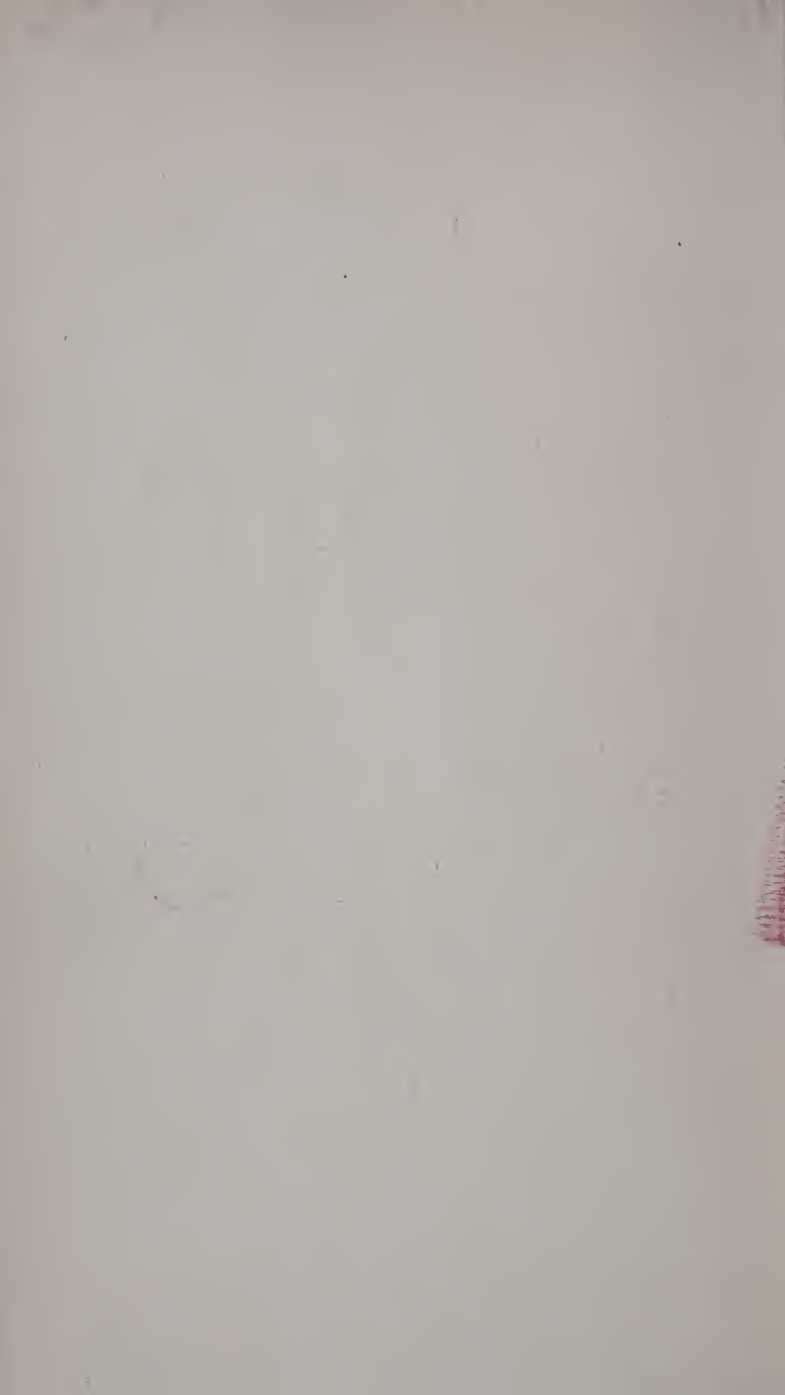
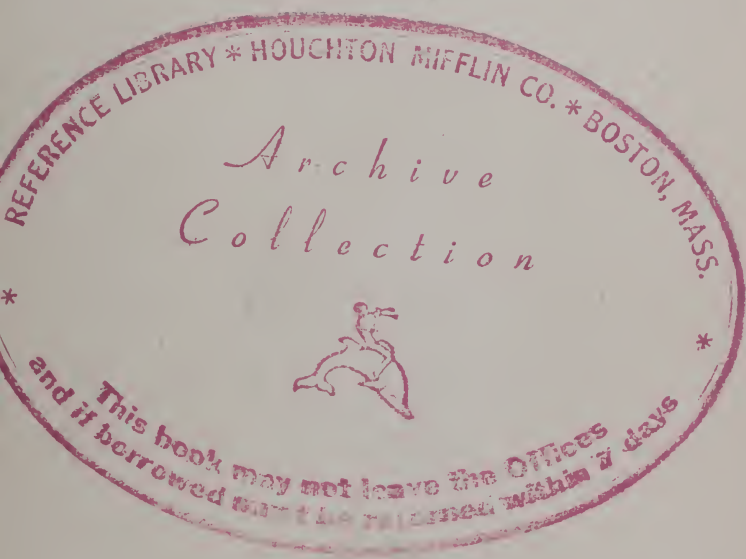


AMERICAN ACTORS
SERIES



WITH THE BOOTHMAN
BY
CLARENCE CLARKE

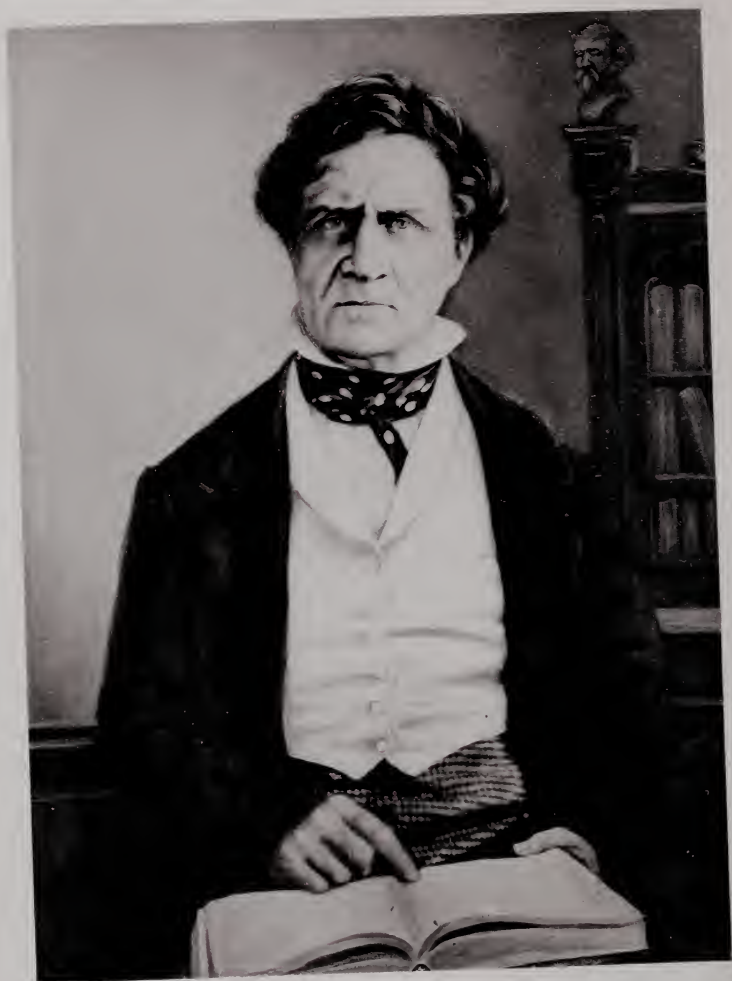




American Actor Series



EDITED BY LAURENCE HUTTON



AMERICAN ACTOR SERIES

THE ELDER AND THE YOUNGER
BOOTH

By ASIA BOOTH CLARKE



BOSTON
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY
1882

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PART I.



THE ELDER BOOTH.

1796-1852.



*“ And Booths were created for the entertainment of the people,
and were much resorted to.”* — VIEW OF LONDON.



THE ELDER BOOTH.

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH was born on the first day of May, 1796, in the parish of St. Pancras, London. His grandmother, Elizabeth Wilkes, was a relative of John Wilkes, and through his mother he inherited the blood of the Welsh Llewellyns.

The Booths and Wilkes of Clerkenwell were honorably known in their time ; the house of Bishop Burnet, an historical old building, was the birthplace of many of the Booths, and the yard of the ancient church of St. John of Jerusalem still contains the gravestones of their descendants, on which the names of the two families are frequently intermingled. Ruin and demolition have been busy, the black mould of years is over the narrow streets and byways ; but the little court keeps its name of "Booth," and the graves in the narrow slip of church-ground seem likely to last till doomsday.

Richard Booth, the father of the subject of the present sketch, was educated for the law ; but, becoming infatuated with Republicanism, he left home, in company with his cousin John Brevitt, to embark for America (then at war with England), determined to fight in her cause. Booth was taken prisoner and brought back to England, where he subsequently devoted him-

self to the acquirement of knowledge and the practice of his profession. If any punishment was inflicted for his disloyalty, it has never transpired. He lived in affluent circumstances in Bloomsbury, and was a scholar of reputation, though of eccentric character; but his vaunted love of Republicanism rendered him unpopular both as a lawyer and as a man. He kept a picture of General Washington in his drawing-room, before which he insisted that all who entered should bow with reverence.

The other young rebel, Brevitt, escaped to America, fought against England, was made a captain, and subsequently married a Quakeress of Baltimore, readily transforming himself into a Friend and an American.

The subjoined copies of letters on the subject of this patriotic enterprise entered into by Booth and Brevitt may be interesting here, the original papers forming part of the collection of the Wilkes papers, now in the British Museum. Richard Booth at the age of twenty addressed the first to "the great Wilkes." The *Defender of Liberty* sent it immediately to the father, John Booth, who after perusal returned it with a letter expressive of his own views of the conduct of his son and nephew, vouching for their integrity and respectability, but evidently in much distress of mind. The reply is highly significant.

To John Wilkes, Esq., Princes Court, Westminster.

PARIS, Oct. 28th, '77.

SIR, — You will certainly be much surprised at the receipt of this letter, which comes from two persons of

whom you cannot possibly have the least knowledge, who yet at the same time claim the Honour of being of the same Family as yourself. Our conduct has certainly been in some respects reprehensible, for too rashly putting in execution a project we had for a long time conceived. But as it was thro' an ardent desire to serve in the Glorious cause of Freedom, of which you have always been Fam'd for being the Strict and great Defender, we trust the request we are about to make will be paid regard to. As Englishmen, it may be urged that we are not altogether Justified in taking arms against our native Country, but we hope such a vague argument will have no weight with a Gentleman of your well-known abilities; for as that country has almost parted with all its Rights, which have been given up to the present Tyrannic Government, it must be thought the Duty of every true Briton to assist those who oppose oppression and lawless Tyranny. And as the people of America are composed of men who have still the spirit of their brave Forefathers remaining, it becomes all who are Englishmen to exert their utmost efforts in their behalf, leaving their Country for that purpose; being no more (as we presume) than the Romans, in the war between Octavius and Anthony on the one part, and those illustrious worthys, Brutus and Cassius, on the other, going from the army of the Tyrants to serve in that of the latter, and therefore equally justifiable.

“Dulce et Decorum est pro patria mori,
Sed pro Libertate mori, Dulcissimum est.”

The manner in which we have conducted ourselves

has been so very extraordinary as to be scarcely credible, but we are assured the Bearer of this Letter will convince you of its Authenticity. In short, we left England, and all the advantageous prospects we had there, purposely to go and serve in the Army of the Sons of Liberty, the brave Americans. In order to complete the Enterprise we came from London under a pretence of going on a party of pleasure to the Camp at Warley Common, but instead of proceeding thither, we went immediately for Margate and thence to Ostend, and have since arrived here, where we came to wait upon the Gentlemen who are Agents for the Congress in America, in order to the full completion of our Design of getting appointed officers in the Provincial Service, but for that purpose have since found it necessary to procure a Letter of recommendation from some Gentleman in the Interest of Liberty in England, and understand from Mr. Arthur Lee (who has promised to interest himself greatly in our behalf), that no recommendation will be of more service to us than yours. Our request therefore is, that you will condescend to give one in our favour, directed to that Gentleman at the "Hotel de la Reine, la Rue des Bons Enfants, à Paris," which you will please to deliver to the Bearer hereof, as soon as possibly convenient. And the favour will be gratefully remembered, and the name of Wilkes be always held in the greatest respect and veneration by, Sir,

Your most — and obed' Serv'ts at command,

R. BOOTH.

JOHN BREVITT.

To John Wilkes, Esqr.

Nov. 5th, 1777.

SIR, — I cannot but express the deepest concern when I reflect on the Imprudence of my Son and Nephew, in taking the liberty of addressing you without your first being apprised of it and your approbation for so doing. My uneasiness is not a little heightened when I consider to what Length their unguarded youth may lead them, and the various expressions which their thoughtless Pens may have made use of. I must assure you, sir, nothing could be more foreign to mine and to their Mother's inclinations, nor could anything stimulate them to it but their looking up to you as the sacred Protector of the greatest Blessing on Earth, fair Freedom, and your — invariable struggles for the Protection of it.

I cannot, however, but flatter myself that should at any Time a correspondence take place between you and Mr. Lee, and these two youths be the subject of it, that you would speak of them as children of those who stood foremost in Friendship for you, and who are not a little happy in the connection of Blood with which we stand.

. . . These youths, sir, have, as you are pleased to observe, to lament their not being personally known to you ; but I bless God, the best of characters can be had of them from Persons of the greatest merit and Fortune.

Your ob'dt humble S^rrv't,

JOHN BOOTH.

"John Booth, Silversmith," further adds that he has exerted himself at the election at Brentford in Wilkes's behalf, and will use his interest, which he flatters himself is not inconsiderable, at a future time, not far distant, when he will also aid by a personal appearance.

He offers for his acceptance a piece of plate, not to obtain favor (meaning the restoration of his son and nephew), but in grateful return for what "I and every lover of Freedom owe to you as the Friend and Guardian of our rights."

These rebellious missives served to keep alive that fire of patriotism which found expression when, in later years, Booth named his sons Junius Brutus and Algeron Sydney. He married a Miss Game or Gam, whose relatives now living in South America trace their descent from an old hero of Agincourt. Mrs. Booth died at the birth of her third child, a daughter.

Junius Brutus received a classical education, and early showed a decided taste for drawing and literature. He learned printing, but abandoned it for the law, and for a time remained in his father's office, transcribing from his dictation dry and turgid documents. Evinced a desire for the navy, he was rated as midshipman on board the brig "Boxer," commanded by Captain Blythe. The vessel's destination being changed from the Mediterranean to the American coast, his father dissuaded him from going; and in an engagement with the enemy the "Boxer" lost all her crew, excepting a cabin boy.

Not possessing that universal genius generally attributed to those who attain eminence, Junius Booth es-

sayed one art after another, and, feeling the insufficiency of painting, poetry, and sculpture, his ever restless mind found its true element in the art of the actor. Avowing his determination to adopt the stage, he left his home against the wishes of his father, and made an engagement with Mr. Penley at Deptford. He began his professional career as *Campillo* in "The Honeymoon" on the 13th December, 1813, at a salary of one pound a week. He afterwards accompanied Mr. Penley to the Continent on a professional tour of some months.

The life of a strolling player, although beset with difficulties, possessed certain charms for the young aspirant, but he now yearned to try his talents in the metropolis. He had met with encouragement from many persons of taste and judgment, and accordingly applied to different London managers for an engagement, among others to Mr. Harris of Covent Garden Theatre. All efforts proved useless, however, and he reluctantly accepted an offer from the Worthing and Brighton Theatres for the season commencing in the summer of 1815, under the management of Mr. Thomas Trotter. The following letter is from Anthony Pasquin (Dr. Williams), and not without interest here.

BRUSSELS, June 9, 1815.

DEAR SIR, — I have received your letter. As to interfering further between you and Mr. Harris, I have only this answer to return, namely, that he is, and will be, the governing judge of what concerns his theatre ; and I have done all that I can *at least immediately* do,

by introducing you to his notice. The rest remains with yourself. In your engagement at Brighton during the summer, I would recommend it to you to play some of your best parts, such as *Richard the Third*, *Norval*, *Sir Edward Mortimer*, but particularly *Richard* for your benefit, as there may be *many eyes* directed toward you, in pursuance of the favorable report which I deemed it necessary to make of your exertions. I have not the honor to know Mr. Trotter, the manager, but am persuaded he will see clearly that you are far above the common class of theatrical *tyros*.

You have learning and a proper sense of your present critical situation ; then use both to the furtherance of your dramatic reputation ; but do not attend to the suggestion of every trifling observer, but rather act from your own feelings with an occasional reference to that great model of real perfection in many characters, Mr. John Kemble. But above all preserve a modest demeanor, though you may feel internally vain, as all men have vanity, with this distinction, that the blockhead renders his weakness apparent, and the sensible man does not.

I shall be in England, in all probability, before the announcement of the winter theatres. When you arrive at Brighton, seek for a Mr. Sicklemar, and present him my kindest remembrances, for he is truly a worthy man, and his advice and protection may be eminently serviceable to you.

We are all in a state of military bustle, with the common enemy at our gates.

Believe me your friend and very humble servant,

J. WILLIAMS.

P. S. Keep the *terms* of your engagement a secret ; and read at your leisure the part of *Achmet* in "Barbarossa."

TO MR. JUNIUS BOOTH.

Mr. Booth received thirty shillings a week at the Worthing Theatre. He afterward became prompter, which capacity he filled until October. Harley, the comedian, was a member of the company. Mr. Booth finally succeeded in securing an engagement at Covent Garden Theatre, and was announced for *Silvius* in "As You Like It," instead of *Richard*, as he had been led to expect. His friends were few, though sincere and untiring in their endeavors to have him placed in his true light, and were indignant that managers should neglect with such determination one who had given so much promise of greatness. He continued acting at that house during the season, occasionally playing subordinate characters, and receiving a salary of two pounds per week. The most important part assigned him was *Henry* in the "Maid and the Magpie." It was frequently related at this period of his career, to the discredit of Miss Sally Booth, that she was painfully concerned lest Mr. Booth should be mistaken for a relative of hers, and modestly suggested that he should add a final "e" to his name.

Pained by the contemptuous coldness of those who surrounded him, and perceiving that no advancement awaited him, he again joined Mr. Trotter of the Worthing and Brighton Theatres. He filled the position of acting manager for two guineas a week and a ben-

efit ; but feeling his position intolerable, he left the theatre in a despairing mood. He had previously been cast for *Harlequin*, but was prevented from playing it by an accident which he met with at rehearsal. He had frequently personated *Fitzharding* in the comedy of "Smiles and Tears," and had rendered himself a great favorite in the part. After a brief visit to Windsor, Mr. Booth once more returned to Worthing, where he was immediately re-engaged by his former manager.

He appeared subsequently at the Brighton Theatre, when Edmund Kean, who was announced for the part of *Sir Giles Overreach*, failed to arrive, and Mr. Booth was asked to assume the character. The audience was small, and evinced much disapprobation on the entrance of the substitute ; but he had not spoken many lines ere their attention became riveted, and before the close of the play he was warmly greeted and received every mark of their satisfaction. Murmurs of his "presumption" and "youthful ambition" died away altogether, and he was hailed by acclamations of delighted surprise.

Mr. Booth played *Bertram* at Worthing with increased honors the warmth of his reception overpowered him, so suddenly had the tide turned in his favor. His *Richard III.* was acknowledged as a great performance, and at last the public discerned that the young actor had genius and determination.

At the suggestion of the Hon. Mrs. Chambers, Lord Erskine, Garrow, Dr. Williams, and others, Mr. Harris was induced to give Mr. Booth a trial-night at Covent

Garden Theatre, and in a more important character than he had yet attempted there. The letter bearing this news passed Mr. Booth on his way to London, and much to his astonishment he found himself on his arrival announced to perform *Richard III.*, after having written fruitlessly to every metropolitan manager for an engagement. On Feb. 12, 1817, he appeared as *Richard* at this theatre, and earned the warmest approbation and applause.

A number of newspaper criticisms of this performance are here appended.

“Mr. Booth repeated his performance of *Richard* last night with increased success, and amidst the rapturous plaudits of the audience. To all the principal scenes he gave most forcible and masterly effect, and may be said to have already established himself at the height of his profession. On ‘Guy Mannering’ being given out for this evening, there was a general call for ‘Richard’ again, on which Mr. Abbott announced that the managers intended ‘Richard the Third’ for performance again on Monday night. The house then rang with plaudits in anticipation of the further delight to be afforded by so exquisite a performance. Among the personages of distinction present, we noticed their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, who appeared highly delighted with the fine acting of Mr. Booth.” — *Feb.* 14, 1817.

“The gentleman whom the managers have cleverly procured to be a *Richard the Third*, at Covent Garden, is surely one of nature’s duplicates ; — if he be not Mr. Kean himself, he is as ingenious a fac-simile as we ever

beheld. We never saw a better imitation. Mr. Booth (so the gentleman is named) has all Mr. Kean's tempestuous action in his passionate scenes, and all and more of his familiarity in calm ones ; he has the eyes, face, and walk of Kean, — the same stamp of the foot, the same voice, except in its vehement tones, which, instead of being broken, hoarse, and fatiguing, are deep, loud, and coarse. Mr. Kean's tones in the last scenes of 'Richard' are indeed, as a friend once observed, like a hackney coachman's at one o'clock in the morning ; Mr. Booth's are of the same kind, but not in so ripened a state. When we entered the box at Covent Garden, the other evening, and heard Mr. Booth in the scene with *Lady Anne*, we really were doubtful whether we had not mistaken the house, and wandered into Drury Lane. He leant against the side-pillar, as *Lady Anne* advanced, in the very attitude that Mr. Kean adopts ; and all his tones, looks, and movements were Drury Lane property. He dressed the part as Mr. Kean dresses it, and made due pauses, starts, and stares, as that actor makes them. Now we honestly confess, that never since we wielded the critical pen, have we at any time found ourselves so puzzled in our opinions of an actor as in the case before us. The two houses have long been running a race of similarities, and now, indeed, they are neck and neck. The two *Maids* and the two *Magpies* were not more alike than the two *Richards*. If Mr. Booth has made Mr. Kean's acting a study, and has merely given us an imitation of what is in itself but an imitation, then we utterly give him up, and consider him no better than

the shadow of a shade. But if nature has, by way of a joke, made two bodies alike, and given them similar conceptions and sounds, then Mr. Booth must not be rudely cast aside, because his better half happened to be seen first. It might have been Mr. Kean's fate to have been styled an imitator. There is one thing, however, that we shrewdly suspect, which is, that nature has put both souls into one body: we will not, in the present stage of the enquiry, declare which we think the unfurnished one. Mr. Booth had great difficulties to struggle against on his first appearance. The image of *Richard* has been stamped by one hand on the minds of all parties. Any copy would be immediately detected, any deviation be instantaneously perceived and opposed. . . . Every personator of *Richard* must fight like a madman, and fence on the ground, and when disarmed and wounded, thrust with savage impotence with his naked hand,

‘And sink outwearied, rather than o’ercome.’

Mr. Kean has passed this manner into a law, and woe be to him who breaks it. No one but Mr. Kemble can be allowed to parry like a schoolboy, and drop like a gentleman. Mr. Booth was sure of the disapprobation of a certain set of these would-be judges, who would hiss him for misunderstanding his part if he did not follow Kean, and who would hiss him likewise for copying if he did.

‘To both their hates must he be accessary.’

As we felt so puzzled in our opinion of Mr. Booth's merits, we made a point of seeing *Richard* again rep-

resented by him. On the second night he played much better, though still he was Kean, and a full audience earnestly cheered him. This strange similarity between the two tragedians is a great misfortune to them.

‘For both or one of them, the time is come.’

If they be of equal merits, — though this we do not at all believe, — the public will hate them both, for it hates equality.

‘Two at a time, there’s no mortal can bear,’

so said *Macbeth*; and a profound reasoner on human actions in the ‘Comedy of Errors,’ —

‘One of these men is genius to the other.’

We shall perhaps hear Mr. Booth applying the last two lines of the same play : —

‘We came into the world like brother and brother,
And now let’s go hand in hand, not one before another.’”

Champion, Feb. 16, 1817.

“In the course of the present week the managers have performed their full duty in endeavoring by their novelties to dispel the dulness of the season, and to withdraw us, by splendors within, from the fogs, damps, and darkness without. In no country in the world, we believe, is the drama, both as respects actors and writers, at a nearer approach to perfection than in England. The German stage is intolerable. And if the French exceed us in levity, that levity is founded on passions and feelings which we hope will never have place amongst ourselves. It is to the praise of an

English audience, that they command decency and morality in their dramatic writers, and that even in their lighter moments they never forget their higher interests, and the important duties of decorum, faith, and modesty. . . . But he must be a bold man who could venture to enter the lists with Kean, in a part like this, and who could expect anything from an audience having Kean before their eyes, but a bare indulgence and pardon. . . . Mr. Booth did not disappoint the expectation of his friends, and appears to have much exceeded the hopes of the audience. He was vigorous, spirited, and intelligent. His figure is small, — smaller even than Kean's ; his voice in its natural tones melodious, but husky and rough when overstrained ; his countenance is manly, and full of expression ; and as respects mere looks, his face and profile certainly exceed those of Kean." — *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, Feb. 16, 1817.

These carefully written critiques, as well as those of later date, show how vivid an impression the young aspirant created, although coming as he did in direct opposition to the established and elder favorite, Kean.

Booth's friends, while rejoicing in his success, persuaded him to defer further repetition of his performance in consequence of the great excitement and fatigue which he had undergone. As no definite engagement had been effected, he was advised to demand suitable terms ; but Mr. Harris reminded him of the salary he received during the preceding season, namely, two pounds a week, and proposed to pay him five instead. This offer being declined, a controversy

arose, which Mr. Booth ended by desiring to have his name taken from the bills. Mr. Edmund Kean of the rival theatre, hearing of this misunderstanding, immediately drove in his chariot to visit Mr. Booth, overwhelmed him with congratulations, and told him to "jump in ; he had got an engagement for him."

They drove at once to the Committee Room of the Drury Lane Theatre, where Lord Essex, Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Lamb were assembled ; a paper was drawn up which Mr. Booth was hurriedly induced to sign, not being allowed time for quiet reflection or the advice of others. These gentlemen in their friendly conversation dwelt on the unjust reception of his proposal by Mr. Harris, assuring him that he would have no difficulty whatever, as his name was already omitted in his bills. Mr. Booth considered himself entirely released from the Covent Garden Theatre and duly engaged at Drury Lane. Mr. Harris, being apprised of this stratagem, hastened to the rival house, and expostulated with these gentlemen, but in vain, as they considered Mr. Booth's engagement at Drury Lane irrevocable. The following newspaper extracts are interesting here, and explain the position of affairs.

"The tragedy of 'Richard the Third,' in which Mr. Booth was to perform the principal character for the third time, was on Thursday night announced for yesterday evening [at Covent Garden]. Instead of this, however, the play of 'Pizarro' was advertised in the bills of the day, without any mention whatever being made of Mr. Booth. The audience therefore, somewhat disappointed at not finding '*Richard* himself again,'

called for an explanation, on which Mr. Fawcett came forward and addressed them as follows : —

“ ‘ Ladies and Gentlemen, — As far as I am able, I will state to you the reason why the play was changed and Mr. Booth did not appear in the character of *Richard* this evening. From the conversation that gentleman last had with the proprietors it appears to have been his own fault. I was not present at the conversation, but the particulars of it have been detailed to me. Mr. Booth appeared particularly anxious that before he again played the character of *Richard* on Monday evening his salary should be fixed. Mr. Harris told him that in the present state of the business he considered that mode would be neither for Mr. Booth’s advantage nor the interest of the theatre, but that his salary should be settled from the moment of his first performance on these boards, subject to subsequent arrangement that might depend on his success and the advantage he might be to the theatre. I beg leave to call to your recollection, ladies and gentlemen, that the charge of parsimony has never been made against the managers of this theatre, but the crimination has always been on the other side. A variety of instances of great salaries given to excellent actors and actresses may be adduced to illustrate the liberality of the proprietors ; and in the cases of the lamented Mr. Cooke and our great favorite Miss O’Neill the point is conclusive. That lady and gentleman were engaged to perform at this theatre on very humble salaries, and that on articles which would have continued for three or five years ; but no sooner were their abilities appreciated, and they drew money to the

treasury of this theatre, than their articles were instantly torn, and liberal remuneration, commensurate with their talents, awarded them. I am sadly afraid that Mr. Booth has been ill-advised in this business, and that he demanded in the first instance such a salary as future efforts would no doubt have entitled him to.' (Here loud cries of 'You 've driven him to Drury Lane, to the country again.') Mr. Fawcett resumed : Nothing could be further from his wish than that Mr. Booth should return to the country ; he should be happy to see him on these boards again ; he hoped the door of reconciliation was still open, and that all would be amicably arranged." — *London Morning Post*, Feb. 18, 1817.

"The circumstance of Mr. Booth's engagement at this theatre [Drury Lane] seems to have excited an universal sensation in the public mind, if we are to judge from the extremely crowded and brilliant assemblage which was collected last night to witness his *Iago*. His imputed similarity in voice, in figure, and in countenance to Mr. Kean, aided by his own intrinsic genius, has already obtained for him a very distinguished attention ; but that attention was heightened to a degree of intenseness seldom experienced before in a British theatre, when both the image and the substance were placed side by side, and an opportunity was offered to compare instantaneously their every word, look, and action. It is at such a moment that their relative merits can alone be ascertained with correctness ; and it appeared to us that the resemblance so much celebrated was by no means uniform or intentional. Nature has undoubtedly cast both Mr. Kean and Mr. Booth in

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

This present **THURSDAY**, February 20, 1817,

Their Majesties' Servants will perform SHAKESPEARE'S Tragedy of

O T H E L L O.

Duke of Venice, Mr. R. PHILLIPS, Brabantio, Mr. POWELL,
Gratiano, Mr. CARR, Lodovico, Mr. COOKE, Montano, Mr. KENT,
Othello, Mr. KEAN,

Cassio, Mr. HOLLAND, Roderigo, Mr. S. PENLEY,
Iago, Mr. BOOTH,

(His First Appearance at this Theatre.)

Antonio, Mr. Coveney. Julio, Mr. Ebsworth,

Marco, Mr. Jamieson, Paulo, Mr. Goodman, Giovanni, Mr. Buxton,

Luca, Mr. G. Wells, Messenger, Mr. Minton, Leonardo, Mr. Evans.

Desdemona, Mrs. BARTLEY,

Emilia, Mrs. KNIGHT.

After which (for the 16th time) a new pastoral Ballet, composed by Mr. Evans, called

PATRICK'S RETURN.

Principal Dancers.—Mr. OSCAR HYRNE,

Mr. MAY, Mr. EBSWORTH,

Miss SMITH,

Miss TREE, Mrs. VEDY, Miss HART, Mrs. MAY, Miss GLADHILL,

To which will be added (4th time at this Theatre) the comick Afterpiece of

The FOLLIES of a DAY.

Count Almaviva, Mr. RAE,

Page, Miss KILLY,

Figaro, Mr. HARTLEY,

Antonio, Mr. MINDEN,

Basil, Mr. FISHER, Philo, Mr. MINTON

Countess, Mrs. GREGG,

Susan, Mrs. ALSTON,

Agnes, Miss Cooke,

Upper Box or Regatta.—No Money to be returned.—Lowndes, Printer, Mason's-Court, Drury-Lane.

The Publick are respectfully informed, that

Mr. BOOTH

is engaged at this Theatre, and will make his first Appearance

This Evening, in the Character of Iago, in the Tragedy of Othello.

Othello, Mr. KEAN.

Due Notice will be given of the next Representation of the Comedy of the INCONSTANT, which was performed on Saturday Evening with the highest Approbation.

The NEW BALLET called PATRICK'S RETURN.

performed on Tuesday for the 9th time, was honoured with a most brilliant Reception: it will be repeated this Evening, and every Evening till further Notice

THE FOLLIES of a DAY.

performed last Night for the third time, was again received with most distinguished and universal Applause.—it will therefore be repeated this Evening.

In Consequence of numerous Enquiries at the Box-Office for the next Representation of

TIMON OF ATHENS,

it will be performed on Saturday next.

SOUTHERN'S Tragedy of OROONOKO,

in which Mr. KEAN made his 9th Appearance in the Character of Oronoko, was performed on Wednesday to a brilliant and overflowing Audience, and honoured throughout with the most enthusiastic Applause.—it will be repeated early in the next Week.

Mrs. ALSOP, (Daughter of the late Mrs. JORDAN.)

Will appear as SUSAN, in the FOLLIES of a DAY, this Evening.

Mr. KEAN

Will perform OTHELLO this Evening and TIMON on Saturday.

To-morrow, there will be no Performance at this Theatre.

On Saturday, SHAKESPEARE'S Tragedy of TIMON OF ATHENS, Timon, Mr. KEAN.

A NEW TRAGEDY

— is in Rehearsal, and will speedily be produced.



a mould nearly the same, but it is certain that she has infused a much greater portion of the divine fire through the composition of one than through that of the other. The theatre was filled in every quarter at an early hour; we believe that if it were twice as large it would have been crowded on this occasion. The moment Mr. Booth entered he was saluted by a general and most ardent cheering; he appeared completely master of his feelings; when he came to that passage in which *Iago* says, 'I know my price,' the pit immediately seized the allusion and testified their sense of the treatment which he received from the proprietors of the rival house. His conception of the character was throughout perfectly correct, and there was no part of it which he did not delineate with the power and spirit of a master. The lines, 'He who steals my purse,' he delivered with much emphasis and propriety, but the scene in which he excelled, and in which perhaps he cannot be rivalled by any other person than Kean himself, was that scene where, while he tells *Othello* to beware of jealousy, he is anxiously distilling into his mind every essence of which that torturing feeling is composed. . . . Towards the conclusion the business of *Iago* gradually decreases, his schemes all succeed, his revenge is satiated, and the opportunities of display become proportionally lessened. Mr. Booth seemed conscious of this, and he wisely avoided bestowing any importance upon that which of itself deserved none. His departure from the scene he marked in a novel and rather a hazardous manner. He looked at *Othello* with a significant gaze, then pointed to his own wife, as if to express that her violation by the

Moor was the cause of all his perfidy. He then struck his breast in a triumphant manner, meaning that his vindication was complete and gratifying. If this pantomime had been abbreviated, we are sure it would be more consistent with the dignity of tragedy, and would have reflected a higher lustre on the judgment of the actor. . . . When he (Mr. Kean) first entered, he took Mr. Booth by the hand. An action so generous and so amiable could not have escaped the observation of the audience. From that moment they took every opportunity of showing their admiration of his unrivalled genius ; and surely never was their applause more richly merited. . . . The piece was given out for repetition on Saturday night, amidst the unanimous acclamations of the audience. Several of the Nobility were present, and a few ladies who seemed just to have left the Queen's drawing-room were conspicuous in the stage boxes." — *Morning Post*.

An English theatrical work of 1825, referring to this production of "Othello," says : —

"Booth's *entrée* at the very opening of the scene was hailed with the most flattering plaudits, and by a house crowded to suffocation. When Kean and Booth entered together the applause was electrical. The circumstance itself is only paralleled by the conjunction of Garrick and Quin ; and our modern performers looked at one another and then at their auditors, as if uncertain what to do. At length, after Kean had bowed at least half a dozen times, they stood closely together and indicated their gratitude by both bowing very respectfully to the whole house. Kean on this occasion outdid

all his former outdoings ; and though *Iago* is not a part for applause, Booth elicited it in every scene."

Mr. Kean, the acknowledged king of tragedy, did not intend to allow a continuation of this rivalry. He had previously seen the power of his adversary, and merely proffered him a taste of adulation and success before attempting his downfall. It is needless to explain that in the signing of that fatal memorandum Mr. Kean had a covert design. He knew the contents in their literal and technical signification, and Mr. Booth did not.

The scheme was soon developed, as Mr. Booth received information that he would not be allowed to play any of Mr. Kean's parts, *Richard*, *Hamlet*, *Bertram*, *Sir Giles Overreach*, etc., but that he was to perform *Richmond* on Thursday to Mr. Kean's *Richard*, which was in direct violation of his engagement.

In the publication of these unfortunate events many gentlemen who were spoken of as Mr. Booth's friends proved to be his secret enemies ; their conciliatory manner might have been deemed politic at the time, and under existing circumstances judicious, but it is certain that their machinations were adroitly veiled, and his youth, inexperience and gratitude made him an easy prey in the hands of clever men.

Kean himself, Judas-like, betrayed with a show of kindness, although the mention of his name in later years elicited from Mr. Booth only admiration for him, as an actor ; he said, " Kean was an untaught genius ; therefore he followed Nature." As was written of himself in after years, " That master mind of Junius Brutus

Booth, like Homer, learnt of Nature, which is the breath of Genius."

Oxberry's "Dramatic Biography" thus speaks of the quarrel between Kean and Booth:—

"Those who are inclined to believe that Edmund Kean did all this from feeling toward Mr. Booth are welcome to retain their opinions; but we beg leave to differ. That Kean wished Booth to have a competent salary we believe; but that he also wished and intended to crush any hope of rivalry on his part we are absolutely sure. During his career Mr. Kean has never suffered any performer to have a chance of eclipsing him in public favor; he threw up *Manuel* because Rae was so excellent in *De Zelos*,—he would not perform in the 'Italians,' because he feared to stand beside Miss Kelley's *Page*, and he would not allow David Fisher to play *Hamlet* for his own benefit."

Excitement was now at its height, and placards were teeming with admiration of the *Moor* and his *Ancient*. The rival players were the principal topic of conversation, and parties were known as the *Keanites* and the *Boothites*.

At the time of receiving the information from Drury Lane that he was no longer to appear in equal parts with Kean, he was also notified by Mr. Harris that his engagement at 'Covent Garden was not legally ended. Suffering from bodily weakness and long-continued worry of mind, these new distresses wrought upon his excitability so as to unnerve him for further struggle.

He was induced to refuse to play *Iago*, and a note was despatched to Mr. Rae at Drury Lane to that

effect. This was at three o'clock, — in full time for a change of performance or a placarded apology for Mr. Booth's non-appearance in the evening.

A London journal says : —

"A great disappointment occurred at this theatre [Drury Lane] on Saturday evening, from the unexpected absence of Mr. Booth, who had been announced to perform the part of *Iago* for the second time. The house was filled at an early hour, and after considerable delay had taken place, and much disapprobation expressed, the manager came forward, and read the following note from Mr. Booth : —

" 'Mr. Booth presents his compliments to Mr. Rae, and begs to inform him that, from the excessive anxiety of mind he has experienced during the past week, he finds himself so extremely unwell that he shall not be able to perform this evening (Saturday), and he has gone out of town to recruit himself.' "

"Under these circumstances Mr. Rae informed the audience that Mr. Kean had kindly consented to perform *Iago*, and that he (Mr. Rae) would undertake the part of *Othello*. To this arrangement considerable opposition arose, and there was a pretty general call for Kean in *Othello* instead of *Iago*. Amidst the confusion, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester entered the house, and 'God Save the King' was called for, and sung with great effect, and amidst the warmest demonstrations of loyalty from all parts of the house. The whole audience is said to have become so perfectly good-humored that in the confusion Mr. Kean was permitted to follow his original design of acting *Iago* without further opposition." — *Feb.* 24, 1817.

The following "Circular" explains itself : —

"THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE,
Feb. 24, 1817.

"In consequence of the disappointment the public experienced on Saturday night at Drury Lane Theatre, by the non-appearance of Mr. Booth in the character of *Iago*, and hand-bills having been posted yesterday (Sunday) in all parts of the town, stating that Mr. Booth had entered into an engagement with the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre for three years, the manager of Drury Lane Theatre thinks it due from him to the public to state that on Monday last, the 17th inst., Mr. Booth signed a written engagement to Drury Lane Theatre for three years, on terms proposed by *himself*, having previously stated that he had no engagement with the Covent Garden proprietors, that all treaties with that theatre were at an end, and that he had requested his name to be taken out of their bills, which had accordingly been done. In pursuance of which engagement, he performed *Iago* on Thursday night, and was announced to repeat the character on the 22d, 24th, and 25th inst."

To this Mr. Booth replied : —

GENTLEMEN, — In an unguarded moment I quitted Covent Garden Theatre (where the most eligible situation for the exertion of my professional talents was open to me), to go over to Drury Lane Theatre, where I have since found to my cost that every character which I was ever desirous or capable of playing was already

in possession, and that there was no chance of my appearing in the same. What occasion therefore could you have for me, unless to crush any talent that I may possess in its infancy?

I have seen through my error, and have therefore renewed the negotiation which was so unfortunately interrupted with the proprietors of the Covent Garden, and have just signed a regular article with them for three years. Consequently I have no longer the power of appearing again at Drury Lane, and you will have the goodness to take my name entirely out of your bills.

I have heard, gentlemen, that your treasury has benefited considerably from my appearance on Thursday last. I ask no pecuniary recompense for it. I only request that you will not seek to persecute or molest a young man just entering into life, and who cannot afford either to be shelved (according to the theatrical phrase) at Drury Lane Theatre, or to be put into such characters as must infallibly mar all his future prospects.

I have the honor to be, gentlemen,

Your very obedient humble servant,

J. B. BOOTH.

And the following came from Covent Garden :—

“In reply to the Circular dated ‘Feb. 24th, Drury Lane Theatre,’ the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre feel it incumbent on them to state to the public the following facts :—

“1st. That Mr. Booth having performed two nights at Covent Garden Theatre, and a negotiation going on

for a three-years engagement, the Drury Lane Subcommittee, previous to their opening a treaty with Mr. Booth, were bound, by long-established, honorable agreement, to apply to the Covent Garden proprietors, and learn from them if such negotiation was broken off. But, contrary to such fair and open communication, they, in the absence of the Covent Garden proprietors, sent for Mr. Booth to the Committee Room, where he hastily signed a memorandum for an engagement, against which one of the Covent Garden proprietors, on his coming to town an hour afterwards, openly and vainly remonstrated with the sub-committee.

“2d. That under such circumstances the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre, conceiving they had a lawful claim on Mr. Booth’s services, were about to take legal measures against him, when, through the medium of a friend of Mr. Booth, who saw his distress of mind in consequence of the perilous situation in which he had rashly and unguardedly placed himself, the negotiation was renewed, and finally terminated on Saturday, when the Covent Garden proprietors would with pleasure have permitted Mr. Booth to perform for that evening at Drury Lane Theatre, but he was literally too ill to make the attempt.

“3d. For the truth of the above statements, and for the justice of their case, the proprietors of the Covent Garden Theatre are ready to refer to any tribunal competent to decide on theatrical questions ; but whatever may be the result of the decision, the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre *entreat* that Mr. Booth may not be made the victim of disputes between the two the-

atres ; his youth and inexperience alone having placed him in a dilemma from which it is hoped the usual candor and liberality of Englishmen will still rescue him."

A disgraceful riot ensued, and however vacillating and inexplicable Mr. Booth's conduct appeared, there were many who attributed it to waywardness and inexperience, and were willing to accept him at either house, not cognizant of the design to deprive him of position, the means of livelihood, and ultimately to effect his banishment from the stage. Considering the network of difficulties which entangled him, surely his offence was pardonable, as he possessed in an eminent degree the desire to redeem his faults ; but he was the victim of a hired mob set on by enemies, and his apologies and explanations were received without credence or attention.

An excited audience awaited the entrance of Mr. Booth as *Richard III.* on the evening of February 25, at Covent Garden ; he was greeted by great applause and hisses, and for a time the tumult was deafening. He bravely, yet modestly withstood the displeasure evinced, and when quiet was gradually restored the play proceeded, not without frequent outbursts of mingled signs of disapprobation and pleasure.

The following is from the *Morning Post*, Feb. 26, 1817 :—

"The singular contest between the two winter theatres for the services of Mr. Booth has occupied so much the attention of the town that it is quite unnecessary for us to recapitulate the circumstances under

which it was commenced. . . . In consequence of Mr. Booth having been announced for *Richard*, the house [Covent Garden] was last night crowded to an overflow in a few minutes after the doors had opened, and long before the rising of the curtain the tumult which even at that early hour prevailed strongly reminded us of the scenes which marked the first opening of this theatre when we were nightly deafened by the shouts of the boisterous O. P.'s. The curtain drew up about half past six, and Mr. Booth immediately presented himself to the audience dressed for the character he was announced to sustain. His appearance was highly prepossessing, and promised for a moment, from the fervent plaudits which were heard, to gain the fervor of the house. But the voice of partial resentment soon burst forth from several persons, chiefly in the pit, and the marks of kindness which he received from the majority of the audience were encountered by a noise sufficient to frustrate all his efforts; every appeal to their humanity to be allowed a hearing if only for a moment was in vain. Inflexibly fixed to punish, they would not allow of explanation or apology; his sentence had been predetermined, and they would not listen to one word in mitigation of the stern decree, though in all parts of the house the plaudits were very great, accompanied by the waving of handkerchiefs and hats by the ladies and gentlemen. After some minutes Mr. Booth bowed repeatedly to the audience, and retired. Mr. Fawcett now came forward, but the uproar continued as before. He patiently waited for the tumult to subside, but to no purpose. All the usual

means for procuring silence were resorted to, but without effect. A note was thrown on the stage. Mr. Fawcett knelt down by the lamps to read it, but could not make it out. Another was thrown to him, which he read and bowed as if assenting to something which it contained. Many more scraps of paper were forwarded in the same way. Mr. Fawcett appealed to the house on the impossibility of his reading and answering so many communications. The noise continued, and he at last left the stage without having succeeded in making himself heard. It was attempted to begin the play, and something like the first scene was represented in pantomime. The second opened; *Richard* again came on, and the storm raged with aggravated fury, the applause still decidedly predominating. The hostile party were more virulent than before, and he could find no opportunity for reciting the soliloquy, —

‘Now are our brows crowned with victorious wreaths,
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings.
Grim-visaged war hath smoothed his wrinkled front.’

He again attempted to address the audience, but being still refused a hearing, he left the stage amid the noise of the contending parties. He soon returned, attended by a standard-bearer, exhibiting a placard with the words, ‘Grant silence to explain.’

“This, however, was useless, and they retired from the stage; the play proceeded with the omission of the first scene of ‘*Richard*,’ and was regularly gone through with in dumb show, the applause still decidedly

predominating. Several fights took place in the pit, of which it was impossible to ascertain the object or result. In the scene where *Richard* appears with the children, a new effort was made to propitiate the non-contents. A person suddenly displayed a placard, inscribed 'Mr. Booth wishes to apologize.' Applause and disapprobation followed. Mr. Fawcett came on, and led Mr. Booth to the front. The latter bowed with all humility, and implored permission to speak. The boon was not granted; another placard was exhibited, 'Can Englishmen condemn unheard?' This was also ineffectual, and again it was attempted to proceed with the play. Mr. Barrymore brought Mr. Booth forward to address the house, but this attempt ended like all those which had preceded it. The tumult lasted to the end of the play, of which not one word had been heard from beginning to end. Mr. Booth, in many parts, under the multiplied difficulties with which he had to contend, frequently exerted himself in a manner that afforded the highest ideas of his ability, and made it impossible not to regret that a young man of such great merit should have been placed in such a situation. When the curtain fell, the malcontents put forth repeated shouts and groans; the applause predominated, and a general wave of handkerchiefs and hats took place.

"Now that the play was ended, Mr. Fawcett again led on Mr. Booth, who seemed heart-broken on the occasion. Silence was again solicited, but without avail. They both bowed and retired. The farce was then commenced. A person in the boxes attempted

to address the house, and gave much offence to some who were near him. This led to a fight ; one person spoke against Mr. Booth, and his conduct was very generally resented. A new cry was raised for the manager, who after some time was permitted to speak : —

“ ‘ Ladies and Gentlemen, — If I at all understand the call made on me, it is because an individual has broken in upon the decorum of the theatre.’ ”

“ He was interrupted by persons demanding that the orator in the boxes should be removed. Mr. Fawcett resumed : —

“ ‘ I have been desired to send the peace officers to remove the person complained of. This, in such a case, while I am manager of this theatre, is what I cannot do. If the person has offended, it is in your own breasts to turn him out.’ ”

“ He then retired amid hisses and applause. At the conclusion of the farce, ‘ Killing no Murder,’ Mr. Fawcett was again obliged to come forward, and, in an address, explained that he had come from his home, whither he had retired, to answer this demand. And as he apprehended it was Mr. Booth they wished to see, he informed them that that gentleman had remained in the theatre until a late hour hoping the audience would hear what he had to submit to them, as he flattered himself it would have been satisfactory to every one. Disappointed and overwhelmed with affliction at having incurred their displeasure, he had gone home and was now in bed. ‘ Then bring him forward,’ some voices exclaimed. That, Mr. Fawcett did not hesitate to say, would be a cruelty. Harassed

as his feelings were, to call him from his bed at that late hour to appear before them, was what he thought no person could seriously require. As far as respected himself, he (Mr. F.) felt called upon to explain the conduct of the proprietors. The question between them and the managers of the other theatre was now reduced to a point of law. That decision, he trusted, the public would be content to wait for, and by it the managers must abide. Cries were raised of 'No shelving,' 'No Wolves,' 'Booth forever,' etc., etc. And the house was slowly cleared, and did not entirely close till twelve o'clock."

It having become generally known that Mr. Rae of Drury Lane Theatre was present in the stage box of Covent Garden on the night of the riot, his appearance there was severely commented upon. In a letter to the public, he acknowledges his presence, but disclaims having gone there to assist the opposition against Mr. Booth. He says, —

"I went there officially, by the acquiescence and sanction of the sub-committee, for the purpose (if Mr. Booth expressed any intention of returning to his duty at Drury Lane, which was not totally unexpected) of expressing their sentiments on the subject, and of generally explaining their motives and conduct, in answer to any attack that might have been made from any quarter of the theatre. . . .

"Your humble servant,

"J. RAE.

"March 2d, 1817."

The manager of Covent Garden, in a politely cutting

letter, replied to this portion of Mr. Rae's communication : —

“ . . . Mr. Rae, by his own showing, came into the boxes with an intent to address the audience, if an opportunity had offered, not of his own free-will, but sent by the sub-committee of Drury Lane. . . . The town must surely think it indecent, and highly disrespectful to them, for one theatre to send persons into the other to interfere. I believe no such commission would ever be offered to me by the proprietors of Covent Garden, but I am free to confess, if such should be attempted, I would resist the mandate at all hazards ; for if I appeared in the lower boxes of Drury Lane for the purpose of addressing or disturbing the audience, I should expect what I should be convinced I deserved, — to be turned out with contempt.

“ Your very humble servant,

“ JOHN FAWCETT.”

A fierce newspaper war raged, many written apologies appeared with Mr. Booth's name surreptitiously used in order to allay the disturbance, and evidently to protect the theatres from the mob. These false prints, with that cringing style which he would never have condescended to adopt, served only to increase the intensity of his distress ; for both physically and mentally he was wearing the sharp thorns of ambition, yet,

“ When Fortune means to men most good,
She looks upon them with a threatening eye.”

This period of intense theatrical excitement proved

also a week of vital importance to the interests of the community at large, as it witnessed the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.

On Monday, 24th of February, 1817, the sub-committee of Drury Lane Theatre filed a bill in chancery against Mr. Junius Booth and the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre for an injunction to restrain Mr. Booth from acting at any other theatre than at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

On Tuesday, 25th, upon the humble petition of the plaintiffs, their bill was dismissed out of the court upon their paying the whole of the costs.

On Saturday, 1st of March, Mr. Booth again performed *Richard* to an overflowing house at Covent Garden. His entrance awakened the most rapturous cheering mingled with hisses; wreaths and bouquets, and boughs of laurel fell around him, which elicited groans and hootings from his enemies. A paper was thrown from the pit containing a desire for him to explain and apologize. It was read by him and responded to immediately:—

“Ladies and Gentlemen, — I have endeavored all in my power to atone for the disappointment to which I was instrumental in another place. I have apologized for my conduct on that occasion, and endeavored to explain the circumstances under which that conduct was influenced. I now again most humbly and sincerely repeat my apology.”

The play then continued, frequently interrupted by shouts and hisses, and at the close he was called for by general acclamation. Mr. Fawcett appeared, and

announced a repetition of the performance on the following Monday. The admiration excited by Mr. Booth's unquestioned ability, his youthful appearance, and dignified bearing, tended greatly to allay the storm of opposition, and on the 3d and 6th of March he repeated *Richard* to overflowing houses.

The *London Morning Herald*, March 3, 1817, said, —

“The blockade of all the avenues leading to the place in which Mr. Booth was to appear on Saturday was formed at an early hour in the afternoon ; and the instant the doors opened the theatre was filled in every part. The struggle for places was desperate in the extreme ; several persons must have been considerably hurt in the contests which took place, and hundreds, when they had at last got sight of the door which they desired to enter, were requited for all the inconveniences to which they had subjected themselves by the intelligence that the house was full to an overflow. The audience were no sooner assembled than the cry of ‘Booth forever’ resounded from all parts of the pit, the occupants of which stood on the benches. This was answered by the call of ‘No Booth,’ and the parties immediately joined issue and tried if strength or goodwill would gain the victory. As a sort of overture of clapping and hissing was performed, a person in the pit raised a placard bearing the words, ‘He has been punished enough, let us forgive him.’ The females in the pit were but few, but many ladies of distinction and fashionable appearance seemed disposed to lend their aid in favor of Mr. Booth, and they were joined by

the great majority of the audience. Several placards were at different times hoisted with inscriptions: 'The pit forgives him,' 'No persecution,' 'We pardon him,' 'No playing in London for three years,' 'Booth has done enough to appease John Bull,' 'No Booth,' 'Booth forever,' 'Turn out the Wolves,' 'Beware, the artillery of Drury Lane is in Covent Garden,' 'No hirelings from Drury Lane.' These riotous exclamations and placards produced a tumult inconceivably great. But it was not all noise. The aching bones of many a participator in the riot can testify that there was frequently something more substantial; as in most cases, so in this, where

'Each alike with passion glows,
Words come first and after — blows.'

"Mr. Booth's printed address had been posted in the theatre, and copies distributed through the pit and gallery, so that there was no attempt made to speak from the stage, but not a syllable of the opening scene of 'Richard' could be heard. Oranges and peel were thrown on the stage, and as Mr. Booth came forward laurels were forwarded to the proscenium. He bowed humbly, and in gathering himself to give the first soliloquy, the rapid transition from the modest actor to the exaltation of the stern tyrant, that strange entering into another's individuality, was eminently striking, and gained the wildest applause. In the next scene Mr. Fawcett attempted to address the audience, but silence was as far off as ever; and although the majority were eager to hear him, the riotous minority were again vic-

torious, and the manager was compelled to retire unheard.

“A quarrel broke out in the upper tier of boxes, and some offensive persons were ejected. Another party of Wolves, as they were designated, forced themselves into the already crowded space, and a battle royal was the result. When the furious disturbers were put out, they vented their wrath by thundering at the doors of the boxes with their sticks. Later in the evening a paper was passed to Mr. Booth on the stage, and at length he was allowed to speak, but was almost unheard. There was no abatement of the tumult during the third act of the play, and at the close of the tragedy Mr. Booth was loudly called for ; he came forward with Mr. Fawcett, preceded by a person bearing a placard intended to express the feelings of Mr. Booth. ‘I have acted wrong, I have made an apology, and thrown myself on the candor of Englishmen.’ This aroused the friends of Mr. Booth to renewed efforts on his behalf ; they hailed this last attempt of their favorite to conciliate the public mind with vociferous cheers, and at least seven eighths of the audience were with them. Handkerchiefs waved in prodigious numbers from every part of the house, but the noise of the malcontents was as clamorous as ever. Mr. Booth seemed utterly overcome by the efforts he had made, and physically exhausted he left the stage, having received this last demonstration of good-will in a prolonged three times three, amid the virulent howlings of the opposition. Mr. Fawcett was then called for, and interpreting the call for the usual announcement of the play for the

ucceeding night, he merely suggested that he supposed such was the request, when cries of 'Yes, yes,' — 'Booth,' '*Richard*'—responded. Amid shouts of applause and hisses the fatiguing experience of that evening ended."

So great a likeness between Kean and Booth was naturally turned to account by the detractors of the younger actor. In stature and appearance the resemblance was striking; the faces of both were pre-eminently handsome, of classical regularity and possessing great mobility of feature. Their temperament was similar, both being impulsive and energetic, copying nature with rigid truthfulness, and having that intensity of feeling by which the actor is merged in the character he represents. This complete abandonment of individuality, the surest trait of innate genius, was the distinguishing peculiarity of each, consequently both naturally adopted the same style of acting, founded on that of Cooke, yet possessing all the chaste and classical embodiments of the Kemble school. This similarity of temperament can explain that unavoidable sameness of taste and production, frequently evinced by poets, painters, and actors, more clearly than any argument which can be used to disprove the charge of imitation.

Hazlitt, after acknowledging that Mr. Booth gave the tent scene in "*Richard*" better than he had ever seen it rendered, because "he was himself, and natural," adds: "Mr. Booth pleased us much more as *Iago* than as *Richard*. He was, it is true, well supported by Mr. Kean as *Othello*, but he also supported him better in

that character than any one else we have seen play with him. The two rival actors hunt very well in couples." Again he notes: "Mr. Booth has two voices, — he is of the chameleon quality — capable of reflecting all objects that come in contact with him." He accuses him of possessing his own voice, which he confesses "wants neither strength nor musical expression, but we also occasionally caught the mellow tones of Macready rising out of the thorough-bass of Kean's guttural emphasis." Sparingly and grudgingly does this critic mete out his crumbs of praise to him whom he called "Kean's fell opposite"; and again, with a timid seriousness, that is as ludicrous as sarcastic, he notices his existence as "a gentleman by the name of Booth."

Mr. Booth played *Richard III.* and *Sir Giles Overreach* alternately, until March 15th, when "*Cymbeline*" was produced, with Booth as *Posthumus*, Young as *Iachimo*, and Kemble as *Polydore*. The following, on his rendition of *Posthumus*, are among the numerous flattering criticisms of the day: —

"On Saturday Mr. Booth assumed a new character, — that of *Leonatus Posthumus* in the play of 'Cymbeline.' As this is a part in which Mr. Kean has not been seen on the London stage, considerable curiosity was excited among those who only give Mr. Booth credit for successful imitation, and the theatre was filled at an early hour to witness what was considered by them his first great attempt on his own account. It was not, however, with such a feeling that we repaired thither; we have been satisfied that Mr. Booth had real

talent, and as the resemblance between these two actors was never proved to consist in a close copy of particular passages, a general imitation of style was as easy to be transferred to *Posthumus* as to any other character. That there is a resemblance, a striking resemblance, cannot be denied; but as Nature has done much towards accomplishing this, we cannot see that one actor in his style ought to be treated with scorn whilst another is praised to the skies. The stage has its fashions. Success governs taste. In *Posthumus* Mr. Booth lost none of the reputation he had already acquired. Many passages he gave with great and appropriate energy, some with much dignity, and several in a tone of sarcasm, that told with great effect. Among those last alluded to we particularly admired the following reply to *Iachimo*: —

“‘Your Italy contains none so accomplished a cour-tier, to convince the honor of my mistress; if in the holding or loss of that, you term her frail, I do nothing doubt you have store of thieves; notwithstanding, I fear not my ring.’

“In the scene where *Iachimo* convinces him of the frailty of *Imogen*, he made some powerful appeals to feeling, and was rewarded with thunders of applause; occasionally, however, there was a coarseness attendant on his vigor which it should be his study to dismiss. The want of importance we complained of in his *Iago* sometimes attached to his *Posthumus*. This was particularly felt in the last scene, from the awkwardly retired silence he thought proper to take, which was such as completely to *shelve* him (if we may be allowed the



Mr. Booth as Posthumus.

expression) till the moment when he discovered himself to *Iachimo*. His subsequent exertions were not only perfectly satisfactory, but finely effective ; and he closed his performance amidst vociferous applause."

"In his impassioned scenes, even in the height of grief, of rage, of jealousy, and despair, he never oversteps the bounds of nature. Nothing can be finer than his acting those scenes of torture which occur in the character of *Posthumus* ; and his delivery of the last speech in that character is in the highest degree natural and impressive ; but we shall be more struck with his merits when we consider the common defects from which he is exempt. He has no measured cadences, no unnatural pauses, no affectation, no vulgarisms of speech, no quaint inflections, which even the best actors are so apt to fall into.

"His emphasis is seldom wrong ; he never overacts his part ; his representation is always natural, and if he be sometimes wanting in grace, or propriety of attitude, there is no dry stiffness of manner, — he is at least easy, and it is only wonderful that his faults should be so trifling and so sure of amendment. Indeed, to dwell on such blemishes in an actor of one-and-twenty would be like criticising the figure of a passing cloud ; before we can trace its outline, no trace of it remains."

The following letter is from the pen of the celebrated William Godwin, father-in-law of Shelley and author of "*Caleb Williams*" : —

SKINNER STREET, Feb. 27, 1817.

SIR, — I witnessed your performance of *Richard* and *Iago*, and you may perhaps not be displeased with re-

ceiving hints and remarks from a person of old experience in matters of taste and literature. With your *Richard* I was not altogether pleased. You got through it with too much bustle, activity, and energy, and were rewarded with almost unexampled applause ; but it appeared to me a representation rather of promise than of that full conception and meditation I long for in a performer.

Your *Iago* struck me very differently, — I mean in the third act of the play, for the rest was not excellent. I have seen Garrick and most of the performers of the last age, but I confess that on that evening I saw something new. I never before saw a scene in which two male performers fairly divided the crown, and so completely kept up the ball between them, as to produce all the best effects of illusion. Your tones of insinuation, in particular when you infuse the poison of jealousy into *Othello*, were so true that, by my faith, I felt “this tale might have won my credit too.” I immediately became impressed with the persuasion, this Booth will make a real actor ! I set down these things because, as you are a very young man, they may be of use to you. But I should not have troubled you with this letter were it not for the particular situation in which you now stand. You have incurred the displeasure of the common frequenters of the theatre. I know not how the contest may terminate, but I write earnestly to recommend to you not to be cast down if the event be unfavorable. I shall be the loser if this brutal outcry drives you from the London stage, but *you* will not be the loser. The whole British dominions

will be before you, which you may visit with undiminished fame. You are not driven from us for any defect in your profession. The shortness of your career will only have rendered it more illustrious in the eyes of the inhabitants of distant parts. You will be what in your profession is technically called a *star*; and country-playing, under such circumstances, is, I believe, more profitable than playing in London. You will then return to us, after a year or two, improved in your profession, and unanimously and rapturously welcomed, even by those persons who are now most eager in exploding you. I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM GODWIN.

It is a received opinion, but an erroneous one, that these occurrences banished Mr. Booth from the London stage. On the contrary, he successfully pursued his engagement at Covent Garden, and afterward played frequently at other city theatres. While his fault was insignificant in itself, it was of moment to his detractors, as the riots materially injured him in a professional view, although the result created a longing for a wider field of action.

Mr. Booth had many offers, from provincial managers, for the Passion Week, but preferred Woolwich, where he played *Richard III.*, *Bertram*, *Othello*, and *Sir Giles Overreach*. From a Woolwich correspondent to a London morning paper, the following is taken : —

“Mr. Booth was received by a full and elegant auditory. In the character of *Sir Giles* his claims to emi-

nence were not only not equivocal, but fully established. In the last act more particularly his astonishingly striking display of the variedly agonized and frantic feelings with which *Sir Giles* is agitated at the failure of his schemes, came home to the feelings of all, and reiterated plaudits spoke the approbation of a crowded theatre."

On the 31st of March, 1817, Mr. Booth performed *Richard III.* at Woolwich; on the 3d of April, *Othello*; and on Saturday, the 19th of April, he played *Sir Edward Mortimer* in three different towns. At eleven A. M. he played at Cirencester, at four P. M. in Gloucester, and at eight o'clock in Cheltenham. For this arduous achievement he received about thirty pounds. This provincial tour ended on the 13th of December.

On the 7th of April, 1818, he played at Stratford-on-Avon.

This lovely little town — so admired by the tourist, so universally sought by scholar, poet, and divine — has ever been a spot of peculiar reverence to the actor. With more than ordinary tenderness he esteems the privilege of standing on this soil as a portion of his birth-right. The air to him is filled with images of various plays, more weird and fantastic than visions of Walpurgis Night; his mind teems with well-known passages, while quotations apt and beautiful fall from his tongue, and he feels what a glorious honor has been bequeathed his particular art, not alone by the lifelong devotion of one immortal mind, but also by the proud assurance that *Shakspeare* was an actor!

It was solely for the peculiar pleasure of performing

in this place of rare remembrances, that Mr. Booth was induced (as, doubtless, others have similarly been influenced) to personate the characters of *Richard* and *Shylock* in the little theatre at Stratford. To a mind so peculiarly attuned to melancholy as his, how impressive must have been the solemn grandeur of that sacred edifice where the Immortal Poet lies ! —

We enter the holy of holies ;
Pause here, —
For this is the high-priest of Nature,
Shakspeare !

We cannot define the full feeling
Our innermost spirit revealing,
And baffling all art of concealing.

Not the sanctity power has left
O'er the place, —
Dust will all grandeur despoil
And erase, —
But the creatures his pencil has wrought,
And the wisdom his genius has taught,
Will live while the mind holds a thought.

Man's heart was the book Nature gave
To her son ;
And time has attested the work
Nobly done.
Though ages have passed since his birth,
Two worlds are recounting his worth,
And hail him the monarch of earth.

Mr. Booth appeared for the first time as *Sir Edward Mortimer* in the play of "The Iron Chest," at Covent Garden Theatre ; the subjoined criticism records the event, under date of 13th April, 1817.

“ . . . Relieved from the necessity of making a comparison, which might appear invidious, we have only to remark on the performance of Mr. Booth, without at all referring to the exertions of his rival, at the other house. These, however, are so fresh in the memory of the town, as completely successful, that it requires no common skill in the actor to gain a moderate portion of public favor. But the genius and good fortune of Mr. Booth triumph over all common obstacles, and open for him an easy path to fame, where the steep ascent would deter others from the attempt. His exertions last night as *Sir Edward* added largely to the reputation which he had previously acquired ; and if in the opinion of some they proved him to be master of great imitative powers, they satisfied every impartial judge that he was the possessor of great original talent. The fierce emotion, the angry suspicion, the terrible remorse of the murderer, who aspires to rise superior to guilt, and claim a spotless name, were depicted generally with great felicity, and in some instances with an awful fidelity to nature. His scene with *Wilford*, in which he reveals the secret of his shame, was particularly effective. The energy, resentment, and despair which prompt this disclosure were finely marked, and the stern resolution consequent upon it was portrayed with the hand of a master. At the close of the play his efforts were not less fortunate. The confusion and horror growing out of the fatal discovery which results from his new but imperfect crime were happily blended with the remorse and agony which returning love for the innocent object of his persecution failed not to in-

spire. He happily imagined and successfully executed the conflicting emotions which riot in the bosom of *Sir Edward*, obtained the sympathy and commiseration of the audience, and retired amidst thunders of applause."

In July, 1818, Mr. Booth made his first appearance in Glasgow and in Edinburgh, in which cities he played successful engagements. He visited nearly all the principal provincial towns, and reappeared in London in the fall of the year at Covent Garden Theatre, where he repeatedly performed *Richard* and *Iago*. He imitated the attempt of a foreign actor and played *Shylock* in the Jewish dialect; and although Mr. Booth was familiar with Hebrew, it is not positively known now whether he spoke occasionally in that language or played his part in Hebrew throughout. He gave this performance on the 17th of September, during the autumn engagement at Covent Garden, which terminated on the 4th of November, 1818. After acting in several of the English towns he proceeded to Dublin, where he played eight nights most successfully, notwithstanding it was the Lenten season. His share of the receipts amounted to one hundred and four pounds. He visited, on his return, Bridgenorth, Newport, Scarborough, Beverly, York, etc.; and at some of the towns included in this tour the receipt of one pound is marked for the performance of *Sir Edward Mortimer* and *Ferry Sneak*.

The Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres for years had possessed the exclusive privilege of producing Shaksperian plays, by a patent conferred upon them by the crown. The minor theatres, although conducted with as much liberality as their more favored rivals, were obliged to confine themselves to melodrama.

But the exclusive monopoly of the Immortal Bard by the patent theatres was often disputed by the Transpontine houses, which in their production of Shakspeare's plays resorted to the introduction of melodramatic music, and sundry alterations and curtailments, thereby avoiding the strict letter of the law. Mr. Booth broke through the established rules by performing *Richard III.* at the Coburg Theatre, in December, 1819, for six successive nights, and *Horatius* on the following seven.

The run of this piece was interrupted by the death of the Duke of Kent, in respect to whose memory the theatre was closed on Jan. 24, 1820. Upon its re-opening Mr. Booth performed *Brutus* in the "Fall of Tarquin" for five consecutive nights, when all amusements were again interrupted by the death of George the Third. During the month of March he visited Aberdeen, and returned to London to resume his engagement at the Coburg, which theatre opened on Easter Monday, April 3d, with the "Crusaders" and a pantomime. On the 6th, Mr. Harris, of Covent Garden Theatre, negotiated with Mr. Booth to play *Lear* for six nights.

The tragedy of "Lear" was in especial requisition, having long been removed from the stage by royal command, as the madness of *Lear* was similar to the disorder of the late king. The consent of Mr. Glossop, the Coburg manager, was obtained, and "Lear" was accordingly produced on the 13th of April, 1820, with the following cast:—

Lear	Mr. Booth.
Edgar	Mr. C. Kemble.
Edmund	Mr. W. C. Macready.
Kent	Mr. John Fawcett.
Cordelia	Miss S. Booth.

“Mr. Booth’s *Lear* proved one of the proudest efforts of his genius. His execution of this character was transcendently beautiful, and requires no ordinary mind to properly conceive it. The scene in which he is turned out to bide the pelting of the pitiless storm is one of terrific grandeur. How admirably Booth represented the scene, no one who ever witnessed him can forget ; and his recitation of the following passage, amidst the storm and darkness, was sublime : —

“‘Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks ! rage ! blow !
 You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
 Till you have drench’d our steeples !
 You sulph’rous and thought-executing fires,
 Vaunt couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
 Singe my white head.’”

Lear was represented three nights a week for several successive weeks. In consequence of the injunction laid against the minor theatres, prohibiting them from playing the tragedy proper, Mr. Glossop brought out “*Lear of Private Life*,” a piece constructed on “*Father and Daughter*,” a tale by Mrs. Opie. Mr. Glossop effected an engagement with Mr. Booth to play *Fitz-arden* in this piece three nights a week, being the “off nights” of his engagement at Covent Garden. He played the part fifty-three times ; and for his benefit on the 29th of May, 1820, “*The Medusa’s Wreck*” was

performed, a scene from "Lear in Private Life," and the new pantomime of "Fortunio." He visited Norwich, Rochester, and Maidstone, playing a few nights in each place ; and on the 25th of July he opened at Cheltenham, where he acted five nights, and one night at Gloucester. He then took the stage-coach for Ludlow. His memoranda of this date contain the following note : "A lady alone and apparently friendless expired in the coach ; the scene was very touching ; we carried her for six miles ; the remembrance sadly affected my acting that night, for the suddenness of death completely unnerved me. Played *Octavian* and *Bertram* badly."

In August Edmund Kean personated "a round of characters" previous to his departure for America, and Mr. Booth appeared at Drury Lane with him, enacting *Iago* to his *Othello*, *Edgar* to his *Lear*, and *Pierre* to his *Jaffier*. In October Mr. Booth played in Reading, going thence to Weymouth, and other places, reappearing at Drury Lane, under Elliston's management, on the 4th of November. He acted *Lear* several times, as well as *Opeehancanough*, an Indian chief, in an American drama ; and went through a range of characters successfully. The play of "Julius Cæsar" was also produced, with Booth as *Cassius*, James W. Wallack as *Brutus*, and John Cooper as *Marc Antony*, — all of them appearing for the first time in these parts.

This engagement closed on the 13th of January, 1821. On the 18th of this month he married Mary Anne Holmes, at the residence of the Hon. Mrs. Chambers, who had always manifested a great interest

in Mr. Booth's career, and who presented his wife on her wedding-day with those well-known jewels which afterwards decorated his *Richard's* crown.

Mr. and Mrs. Booth made a brief visit to France, stopping at Calais and Boulogne, and on their return to England he decided to visit the West Indies professionally. They sailed from Deal, at which place he purchased a piebald pony named Peacock, to which he had become much attached, and who in after years was closely identified with him in his occupation as a farmer.

The vessel was obliged to stop at the island of Madeira, and, attracted by the loveliness of the scenery, he was induced to pass a portion of his time in surveying its beauties. They remained for several weeks at Madeira ; and as horses were exceedingly rare on the island (oxen and mules being used on the mountains to carry freight), Peacock created great excitement. Sums of money were offered for him, but Mr. Booth declined to part with his new favorite. In ascending the mountain to visit a Carmelite convent, Mrs. Booth was carried in a palanquin by natives, who set down their burthen at the sound of the Angelus bell. Her surprise was great at observing her husband cross himself and pray with them. At the convent Mrs. Booth did not understand the conversation between her husband and the fathers, it being in Latin, but she afterward learned that he was invited by the Prior to attend the midnight burial of a Carmelite, for which purpose he ascended the mountain again and alone.

In April he took passage for himself, wife, and pony in the schooner "Two Brothers," for America.

As Mr. and Mrs. Booth were the only passengers on the vessel, the captain resigned his cabin for their accommodation, and after a tedious voyage of forty-four days they landed at Norfolk, Va., on the 30th of June, 1821. On his arrival, Mr. Booth introduced himself to Mr. Charles Gilfert, manager of the Richmond Theatre, and an engagement was immediately effected. He opened on the 6th of July in Richmond, Va., in the character of *Richard III.*

The effect of a long sea-voyage and the excitement of playing before a new audience rendered him somewhat tame during the first acts, but his fire and energy in the closing scenes delighted the manager and electrified the house. Notwithstanding his coming thus unheralded into a strange country, in the sultriest season of the year, and appearing with all the disadvantages of strange surroundings, he won the most eloquent praise from critics and audience.

Of his *Richard III.* the *Richmond Examiner* said, —

“Gentlemen who have seen Cooke in this part do not hesitate to pronounce Booth superior to *him*, and others who have lately seen Kean in the same character aver that in some scenes he is equal, and in others, the most trying of the play, superior to that celebrated actor.”

He performed four nights, and proved a decided acquisition, as the business of the theatre was at a very low ebb. The characters he personated were *Richard*, *Lear*, *Sir Edward Mortimer*, and *Bertram*. Later he entered into a contract with Messrs. Gilfert and Graham

to act throughout the Union for a specified nightly sum.

In a recent publication Manager Ludlow gives the following account of Mr. Booth's first appearance in Petersburg, Va. : —

“During the month of August, 1821, one of the brightest ‘stars’ in the Western dramatic horizon presented itself in the person of Junius Brutus Booth, — *the* Booth, — who, accompanied by his wife, arrived at Norfolk, Virginia, in a vessel from the island of Madeira. Why he came to the United States at the time and in the way he did, unheralded and unknown, I have never been informed. He presented himself to Mr. Gilfert, the Richmond manager, and said he wished to perform in that city. I understood he had no letters of introduction, and there were some doubts whether he was the real Booth or some impudent adventurer, who, having heard that Mr. Booth contemplated visiting America, took this peculiar way of introducing himself, and, if possible, ‘humbugging’ the Yankees before the real Booth should arrive. The Richmond manager, always ready for some bold and unusual adventure, arranged with Mr. Booth for one night, and a conditional extension of the engagement. Mr. Booth made his first appearance in the United States there and at that time in ‘Richard III.’ Mr. Richard Russell, who was acting as manager of the Petersburg theatre, in the absence of Mr. Caldwell, happened to hear of the appearance of a Mr. Booth in Richmond, and went to that city to ascertain who the person was, assuming that name, and came back highly pleased with the man, saying he had

engaged him to play one night in Petersburg, then to finish his engagement in Richmond, and return to Petersburg for a number of nights. He had selected 'Richard III.' for his first appearance in Petersburg. The play was cast, and put up in the green-room, and the night on which it was to be performed stated. On the morning of the day set apart, the large bills posted on the corners of the streets announced 'the first appearance of the great tragedian, J. B. Booth, from the London theatres, — Covent Garden and Drury Lane.' The play was called for rehearsal at ten o'clock, A. M. At the proper time the rehearsal commenced, but without Mr. Booth. He had not arrived ; but the manager said the rehearsal must go on, and he would have Mr. Booth's scenes rehearsed after he arrived. I think they had reached the fourth act of the play, and I was sauntering near the head of the stairs that led up to the stage, when a small man that I took to be a well-grown boy of about sixteen years of age, came running up the stairs, wearing a roundabout jacket and a cheap straw hat, both covered with dust, and inquired for the stage-manager. I pointed across the stage to Mr. Russell, who at that moment had observed the person with whom I was conversing, and hurried toward us, and, cordially grasping the hand of the strange man, said, 'Ah ! Mr. Booth, I am glad you have arrived ; we were fearful something serious had happened to you.' I do not think any man was ever more astonished than I was just then in beholding this meeting. Is it possible this can be the great Mr. Booth, that Mr. Russell says is 'undoubtedly the best actor living' ? and I be-

gan to think Russell was trying to put off some joke upon us all. I observed, however, that when the small man came upon the stage to rehearse his scenes, he was quite 'at home,' and showed a knowledge of the business of the character that a mere novice or pretender could not have acquired. He ran through the rehearsal very carelessly, gave very few special or peculiar directions, tried the combat of the last act over twice, and said, 'That will do,' and the rehearsal was over. He then told Mr. Russell that he had been a few minutes too late for the stage-coach that had left Richmond early in the morning. And that he soon after started on foot, and had walked all the way, — twenty-five miles ; that his wardrobe had been sent to the stage-office before he was up ; had been taken by the coach, and, he supposed, was ready in the city for the proper claimant.

"When the curtain rose at night, all the company were on the alert to see the supposed great actor make his entrance before the audience. When the proper scene opened, Mr. Booth walked on the stage, made no recognition of the reception applause, and, in an apparently meditative mood, began the soliloquy of 'Now is the Winter of our discontent,' which he delivered with seeming indifference, and with little if any point, something after the manner of a schoolboy repeating a lesson of which he had learned the words, but was heedless of their meaning ; and then made his exit, without receiving any additional applause. I was not where I could ascertain the impression made upon the audience, but on the stage, at the side scenes, the actors were looking at each other in all kinds of ways,

expressive of astonishment and disgust. I was standing near Mr. Benton, an old actor, — the *King Henry* of the evening, — and as I turned to go away, he said, ‘What do you think of him, Mr. Ludlow?’ ‘Think,’ I replied, ‘why, I think, as I thought before, that he is an impostor! What do *you* think of him?’ ‘Why, sir,’ said Benton, ‘if the remainder of his *Richard* should prove like the beginning, I have never yet, I suppose, seen the character played, for it is unlike any I ever saw; it may be very good, but I don’t fancy it.’ I found that among the company, generally, a like estimate of the great man prevailed, Mr. Russell being the only exception; he, having witnessed Mr. Booth’s acting at Richmond, still persisted in saying he was the greatest actor he had ever seen. His scene with *Lady Anne*, where he encounters and interrupts the funeral procession of *King Henry VI.*, was as tame and pointless as his first soliloquy. I had seen George Frederick Cooke perform *Richard III.*, about ten years prior to the time that I saw Mr. Booth first, at which period I was a youth of sixteen years of age, when impressions are vivid and lasting, and I had retained a perfect recollection of the effects Mr. Cooke produced on the audience, myself included; and it seemed to me that no great actor would pass through these two scenes with that careless indifference that Mr. Booth evinced. It has ever remained a mystery to me why Mr. Booth always slighted the first two acts of ‘*Richard III.*’; and I can only account for it on the supposition that it was with the view of reserving his powers for the remaining three acts, in which considerable physical as well as

mental efforts are required. And yet, when I first met Mr. Booth, he did not appear to be deficient in physique. I retained my first impression of Mr. Booth until he came to the fourth act, where, in a scene with *Buckingham*, he hints at the murder of the young princes. Then I thought I discovered something worthy of a great actor. From that on, his acting was unique and wonderful. I had never seen any one produce such effects, and come so near my ideas of the character, — not even Mr. Cooke, who was as far below Mr. Booth in the last two acts as he was above him in the first three. When the curtain fell upon the finishing of the play, there was a burst of applause from audience and actors such as I will venture to say Petersburg never knew before, nor has known since. After this one night's performance Mr. Booth returned to Richmond, finished his engagement there, and then came again to Petersburg, and played six or eight nights to crowded and delighted audiences.

“I hope that the reader will not think me tedious or over-enthusiastic if I relate something more in regard to this gentleman, who, I have long considered, was one of the great lights of the stage, until age and infirmities impaired his faculties. On Mr. Booth's return to Petersburg he commenced his engagement with Colman's play of the ‘Iron Chest,’ in which he performed the character of *Sir Edward Mortimer*, and I had the pleasure of playing with him his secretary, *Wilford*; and here let me state an effect produced on me at that time which half a century has not been able to obliterate, and that will keep its place ‘while memory holds

a seat in this distracted globe.' In the play there is a scene where *Sir Edward* attempts to disclose to *Wilford* a secret which he had kept securely from the world for years, — a murder for which he had been tried and acquitted, and at the trial the course of justice had been disturbed by cries of 'Innocent!' ere the verdict had been declared. In this scene the struggle between his pride and shame, from the necessity of making this youth, *Wilford*, — his secretary, the creature of his bounty, — the depository of this astounding secret, was so terrifically wrought up and so magnificently portrayed that I was brought to a 'standstill' upon the stage, in wonderment of the man's great tragic powers, and only recovered my self-possession when Mr. Booth said, in an undertone, 'Go on, go on!' I never had such an effect produced on me by any other person's acting in the whole course of my dramatic career. Mr. Booth had at that time the finest stage face I ever met with; its splendid contour had not been marred by the breaking of what is commonly called the 'bridge of the nose,' and his eyes, of which he made great use in acting, were brilliant and expressive, — as *Hamlet* says, 'an eye like Mars, to threaten and command.'"

On his second visit to Petersburg Mr. Booth acted six nights to numerous and delighted audiences, then retired to a country-place to enjoy a respite from fatigue. He lived at a roadside inn between Richmond and Petersburg, where many travellers were in the habit of tarrying over night. One evening, Mr. Booth overheard the landlord commanding the waiter

to "get the new lodger's boots," — referring to a fresh arrival who had retired early and thereby caused suspicion in the mind of the wary host. The boy returned with the answer, "The gentleman says he has no boots." "Go up at once," replied the landlord, "and demand his *shoes*." The boy came back and stated in dismay, "The gentleman says he has no shoes." The landlord now became much excited, upon which Mr. Booth inquired why he was so anxious to obtain the lodger's boots. "Why, sir," the host replied confusedly, "we have strange characters stop here sometimes, who have a way of rising early in the morning and walking off before any of the family are astir; so I manage to get possession of their boots, and they are compelled to remain until their bills are settled."

The host and his family assuring themselves of the evil intentions of the "footpad," as they designated the unconscious lodger, were exceedingly anxious in watching his movements. In the morning the person who had been the cause of so many dark surmises made his appearance at the breakfast table, and, to the astonishment of Mr. Booth, he proved to be the distinguished tragedian, Thomas Cooper.

Mr. Booth returned to Richmond in September, and fulfilled a second engagement, which proved more lucrative than the one of the preceding summer.

On the 2d of October, 1821, he arrived in New York, where he was immediately engaged by the manager of the Park Theatre, and announced to play *Richard* on the 5th. From the numerous allusions of the press, the following is copied: —

“The notoriety of Mr. Booth in London (and from the various reports of our friends who had seen him there) had greatly excited public curiosity. In consequence, a full and fashionable audience assembled at an early hour on Friday evening, to witness his début. He was welcomed by three long distinct rounds of applause, and we could perceive he was embarrassed and sensibly affected. When we reflect upon Mr. Booth's youth, and the effect produced by his acting, we cannot withhold from him our highest praise. In the tent scene he showed much originality; rising from the couch, he dashed to the bottom of the stage, and with an attitude and expression of countenance we cannot describe, and will not forget, but which was neither that of Cooke, Cooper, Kean, nor Wallack, he made an extraordinary and most sensible impression on the audience. There was at first a pause, which suddenly burst forth into a long and rapturous applause, intermixed with loud expressions of approbation. In the contest with Richmond, and the dying scene, he was loudly applauded, and fell amidst the cries of ‘Bravo! Bravo!’”

At that time there were but two regular theatres in New York, the Park and the Bowery. “Stars” were generally engaged by managers for the limited space of six nights, and rarely prolonged the engagement beyond twelve. The repetition of standard plays for a great number of nights consecutively, so common in our age, was entirely unknown by the “Old Park” patrons nearly half a century ago.

On the occasion of Mr. Booth's first benefit in New York he appeared as *Hamlet* and as *Ferry Sneak*, in

the old farce of "Mayor of Garratt." The *New York Post* of the ensuing day contained the following notice : —

"At the close of the afterpiece there was an unanimous cry for Mr. Booth, scarcely an individual leaving either pit or boxes, but waited for his change of dress ; he then appeared amid the shouts and huzzas of a delighted audience. The young stranger was so evidently embarrassed at the unexpected compliment, that he was almost unable to speak, and addressed the audience in a voice so low that we were unable to hear all he said. We understood him, however, to say that he was overwhelmed with gratitude ; he knew not how to express the feelings which their kindness and liberality had inspired ; he was unaccustomed on such occasions to address an audience ; he did not expect the honor would have been extended to him ; he never should and never could forget it. This agitation evidently increasing, he bowed to the audience and retired amidst thundering applause, leaving behind him impressions not a little improved by the modesty of his deportment."

From New York Mr. Booth went South, acting in Baltimore, Norfolk, Charleston, New Orleans, and Savannah ; his travels through many of the Southern States being an ovation. It is rumored that he frequently expressed a desire "to retire from public life and keep a lighthouse." That he seriously contemplated such a step is shown by the annexed copy of a memorandum of his own dated February 12, 1822.

"Spoke to Mr. Blount, collector of customs, and one

of the passengers, about Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. He offered it to me with the dwelling-house, and twenty acres of land attached ; and a salary of \$300 per annum, for keeping the light, — government providing oil and cotton, — a quart of oil per diem. Grapes, water-melons, cabbages, potatoes, carrots, and onions grow in abundance there. Rain-water the only drink ; a cistern on the premises for that purpose. Abundance of fish and wild fowl ; — pigs, cows, and horses find good pasture. Soil too light for wheat or corn. Flour bought for four or five dollars a barrel. The office is for life, and only taken away through misbehavior. Lighthouse seventy-five feet high ; light requires trimming every night at twelve o'clock. *No taxes whatever.* Firewood is procured from the pieces of wreck found on the shoals. One dollar per day is the charge for men who assist in cases of wreck. Strawberries, currant-bushes, and apple-trees should be taken there ; also a plough, spades, and chest of carpenter tools. *Pine* tables the best. Mr. Blount is to write me word if the office can be given me in April next, from his seat at Washington, North Carolina."

It may hardly be necessary to add that he did not obtain the situation of "lighthouse-keeper," owing, as was eventually disclosed, to the timely interference of theatrical managers, who were loath to suffer the total eclipse of so brilliant a star. Although his disposition was ever humble and retiring, it is singular that in the zenith of his fame and with such glowing prospects of fortune, he should have contemplated a life of hardship and comparative poverty as more conducive to happiness.

He now made his first appearance in Boston, and the event is thus spoken of in Clapp's "Record of the Boston Stage":—

"The first appearance of this great actor in Boston, where for so many years he has attracted those most conversant with the different schools of acting, and has delighted elsewhere the most critical audiences in the world by his masterly impersonations, occurred on the 6th of May, 1822. He made his appearance as *Richard*, a character which he is identified with wherever he has performed. His acting then received the applause of a Boston audience, and up to his last appearance in this city, prior to his death, he retained the position he so eminently deserved. During his engagement he performed *Sir Edward Mortimer*, *Sir Giles Overreach*, *Octavian*, and for his benefit, *Hamlet*, on which occasion the receipts were eight hundred dollars. Booth's acting always evinced genius. Like Edmund Kean, there was inspiration in his embodiment of Shaksperian characters, and even when the words were lost to the hearing the eye needed no vocal interpreter, for Booth, more than any actor we have ever seen, possessed the power of combining a meaning in every gesture, and a silent glance was equivalent to a delivered sentence. As a soliloquist he excelled. With many actors all soliloquies seem like so many titlepages to the succeeding acts; but Booth avoided all strains after startling points, and gave to such passages, both in *Hamlet* and *Richard*, an interest without destroying the unity of the play."

In the summer of 1822, while the yellow-fever was

raging in Baltimore, Mr. Booth purchased a farm twenty-five miles from that city, lying in Harford County, Maryland. This place became his constant resort when free from the excitement of his profession, and was the birthplace of his children. It was always known as "The Farm," but was in reality a dense woodland, merging on one side into a great forest, called the "Big Woods," which served as a free hunting-ground on moonlight nights when the whole place was rendered musical by the baying of the hounds and the call of the sportsmen. His uncultivated possessions lay three miles equally distant from three small villages, — Belair, the county town, Hickory, and Churchville, — which were merely hamlets, or stopping-places for travellers in the great wilderness of the district. The rough coach-road to the Farm was made picturesque and delightful in summer by the massive trees which arched it. Along this stony highway the post-boy used to ride once a week, sounding his horn, and tossing the ever-welcome letters and papers over the gate. From the road a crooked, narrow pathway wound to the Booth dwelling, which was set among the trees, a quarter of a mile distant. This was a log-cabin, plastered and whitewashed on the exterior; the small square window-frames, and broad, plain shutters, which, like the doors, never knew the innovation of lock or bolt, were painted red. Four rooms besides the loft, the kitchen, and the Old Dominion chimney, made up a picturesque and comfortable abode, standing in a clearing encompassed by huge oak, black walnut, beech, and tulip trees.

The cabin in its primal state, unpainted and unplastered, had been removed to its present locality across several fields. This proceeding caused great wonderment among the villagers, as every available man, ox, and horse, that could be hired, were in requisition. Much time and money were expended in this undertaking, but its successful accomplishment stamped the owner as a master-mind, and the more fiercely the winter storms raged and the summer tornadoes swept by, the more wise did he appear to those who had predicted the quick demolition of the taut little cabin. This costly removal had been effected on account of a spring of delicious water which Mr. Booth had discovered under the thickest trees. These he would not suffer to be removed, but the old spring was ornamented with granite ledges and steps. In its grateful depths dwelt an immense green bull-frog ; and as these creatures are said to live a hundred years, the children of the family used to imagine that he had croaked to the first invaders of his solitude as he did to them. In this shaded spot a little dairy was built, and the thoughtful possessor planted in front of his door a cherry-shoot, anticipating the future when his children should gather under its branches. Those days came in their time, and his tall sons swung themselves up among its great boughs, to read or doze away many a sultry afternoon. Merry groups gossiped under its shelter, little ones danced there, while older ones dreamed, and reared airy castles ; the aged mother in her widowhood remembered happier days in its shadows ; and every year the orioles and mocking-birds paid their wel-

come visits. This grand old grafted tree was very tall and straight, and shaded the entire lawn.

The Farm was belted by a thick, unbroken circle of native trees as far as the eye could reach ; it was completely isolated, and the chief delight of its owner was that it was so perfectly shut in, and away from the world.

An extensive orchard was laid out ; barn and stables were erected, and a clumsily constructed cider-press put together, which was worked by the blacks, — nearly all the labor of the farm being done by them. It was the period of picturesque farming, when flails and sieves were used instead of the noisy threshing-machine and the fan. Mr. Booth advocated the use of lime on his fields, and foresaw the time when bone-dust would be applied for manuring purposes. Substantial negro quarters were built, and a valuable vineyard planted ; a swimming pond, with its little island covered with willow-trees, and a stream for fish were made by turning the numerous branches of a neighboring brook into their respective beds ; the directing mind as well as the readiest hand in all these achievements being “the Massa’s.”

In a few years a little graveyard was railed in, where the Jewish althea bushes had their places among the yews and weeping-willows. In country homesteads these private graveyards are common, and the duty of reading the burial service devolves upon the master of the house when it is impracticable to obtain a clergyman. Mr. Booth was often called upon to officiate at the interment of members of his household here (the blacks being buried outside the rails).

Mr. Booth, now a farmer in earnest, took a weekly magazine, or paper on farming, which he carefully hung on file, as he did his play-bills. He imported fish for his lakelet, but after a brief time they degenerated and passed away, like the Algonquin Indians, whose war trophies and small arrow-heads or elf-shot were thickly embedded in the soft earth of the forest. The delights of the new strange world to which he had come were minutely described in an old note-book (the pencil writing scarcely legible now), interspersed with passages from plays, memoranda of dresses, properties, and stage directions, births and deaths of children, time and duration of meteors, astronomical data, fast days, and lastly a few verses called "The Son of Alknomook," which it is now impossible to decipher, but which were learned from him in childhood by the writer.

His "library" was placed upon a few shelves, and consisted of volumes of Shelley, Coleridge, and Keats, a Gazetteer of the World, an English and a French Dictionary, Racine, Alfieri, Tasso, Dante, Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, Plutarch's Morals and Lives, Milton, Shakspeare, the Koran, Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, and Paley's Theology.

Three engravings adorned the walls of the single parlor, — "Timon of Athens," "The Roman Matron showing her Husband how to Die," and the "Death of Bonaparte," with these words written in the clouds, "*Tête d'Armée.*" The simple furniture of this humble home was of the roughest kind, but such as would for its antiquity be thought valuable and desirable now. It consisted of a corner cupboard filled with quaint

china, a narrow looking-glass with the upper half bearing a picture of the sun and moon, human faces representing each, tall brass andirons, a high brass fender, and a spinning-wheel ; for it was the farmer's pride that all his blankets and woollen goods came from the backs of his own sheep, and were spun at home. An old " Herbalist " hung by the side of the amusing and instructive " Almanack " on the wall ; an ink-horn and a bunch of quills, together with little bags of seed and other necessary small articles, were ranged on little hooks around the looking-glass. The round Dutch oven that baked the wholesome bread, and the immense heavy pewter platters from which the simple meals were eaten, and which served in later years as covers to the milk-crocks in the dairy, also the wonderful cradle-baskets for the babies, and many smaller wicker baskets of odd shapes, would now be readily secured as curiosities. Basket-weaving in the long winter evenings was the favorite occupation of " Old Joe," — young Joe then, — a faithful trusted slave to an indulgent master, who hired him to Mr. Booth year after year till both had grown old. Long after the actor had passed away old Joe, until his own death, remained in the service of the Booth family.

There were some sternly enforced rules in this household. One was the entire abstaining from animal food. Animal life was sacred on the Farm, — even the black snakes, the dangerous copperheads, and the destructive nighthawks and opossums, were spared. The loss of many sheep and hogs induced this merciful farmer at last to have his stock branded ; but farming was less profitable than pleasant, and the actor had to leave his

plough, like Cincinnatus, and go forth at the call of duty. Very necessary, though, were the calm and rest and congenial labor on that secluded farm after the strain on brain and nerves and the long wearisome travelling of those days.

In the year 1822 Mr. Booth welcomed his father to his country home. Richard Booth from his early manhood had regarded America as the desideratum of all men, and he wished to pass the remainder of his life in the United States. He was energetic in managing the Farm in his son's frequent and prolonged absence, and he employed his leisure in copying memoirs of eminent men. At the close of his life he was occupied upon a translation of the "*Æneid*," with a view of adapting it to the stage.

The play-bill announcing the first appearance of Mr. Booth in Philadelphia, at the house now known as the Chestnut Street Theatre, will be found in full on the following page. Three years previously Edmund Kean made his *début* before a Philadelphia audience under the same management.

Mr. Booth usually travelled from Harford County to Baltimore and to Richmond in his carryall with two horses, — "Captain," a very large animal, and the favorite but diminutive "Peacock." He frequently encountered Mr. Cooper, the tragedian, who also travelled by his own conveyance. In the year 1825 Mr. Booth sailed for Europe, accompanied by his family, and an extract from one of his letters to his father, quoted here, refers to an accidental meeting with Edmund Kean.

NEW THEATRE.

The managers respectfully inform the public that

MR. BOOTH,

Of the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane, and Covent Garden, is engaged for a few nights, and will make his first appearance in this city on

Monday Evening, February 17th, 1823,

In the Tragedy of

RICHARD THE THIRD.

Richard, Duke of Gloster	Mr. Booth.
King Henry the Sixth	Mr. Wm. Warren.
Prince of Wales	Mr. Hathwell.
Duke of York	Miss H. Hathwell.
Duke of Buckingham	Mr. W. B. Wood.
Henry, Earl of Richmond	Mr. H. Wallack.
Duke of Norfolk	Mr. Wheatly.
Tressel	Mr. T. Jefferson.
Catesby	Mr. Darley.
Ratcliff	Mr. Scrivener.
Earl of Oxford	Mr. J. Jefferson.
Lieutenant of Tower	Mr. Bignall.
Lord Stanley	Mr. Hathwell.
Lord Mayor	Mr. Burke.
Tyrrel	Mr. Murray.
Blount	Mr. Greene.
Queen Elizabeth	Mrs. Tatnall.
Duchess of York	Mrs. Jefferson.
Lady Anne	Mrs. Darley.

After which, a favorite Farce, called the

SPOILED CHILD.

On Wednesday, the "Iron Chest"; *Sir Edward Mortimer*, Mr. Booth.

On Friday, "A New Way to Pay Old Debts"; *Sir Giles Overreach*, Mr. Booth.



“LIVERPOOL, Sept. 20, 1825.

“DEAR FATHER, — At last we are arrived after a passage of twenty-nine days’ duration, which is a long one from America at this season. To-day we go to London through Leicester. Kean sails the day after to-morrow, by the ‘*Silas Richards*,’ for New York. Strange that he should meet me here — he ready to embark, and to that very country I have just left! He has been quite ill, and looks wretchedly. I passed an hour with him last night at his quarters, and reconciled our ancient misunderstanding. The vessel he goes in to New York will most probably be the conveyance for this letter. I really wish he may meet with success. He has been all along a victim to sharpers and flatterers, who buoyed him up with the notion of omnipotence, which now he awakes from, and perceives the hollowness of those on whom he mostly relied. Macready is sick, Young is gone to Italy for his health, and Elliston is reported to be dying.”

Mr. Booth appeared in London at Drury Lane Theatre, opening in “*Brutus*.” Being loudly called for at the fall of the curtain, he persistently refused to go forward, urging as his reason that the custom should be abolished. After this engagement he played at the Royalty Theatre, and on his opening night after the performance of “*Richard*” the entire building was burned to the ground. It was the result of an accident by which the management lost eighteen thousand pounds, while all that remained of Mr. Booth’s entire wardrobe were three charred links of his coronation collar, which he afterward found amid the ruins.



From one of his letters dated February, 1826, the following extract is taken : —

“The distress is so excessive, in consequence of the number of banks failing and the full weekly list of bankrupts, that men look upon each other doubtful if they shall defend their own, or steal their neighbor’s property. Famine stares all England in the face. As for theatricals, they are not thought of, much less patronized. The emigration to America will be very numerous, as it is hardly possible for the middling classes to keep body and soul together.”

Mr. Booth received an offer to perform in rivalry with W. C. Macready in Dublin, but not considering the pecuniary inducement sufficient, he declined ; and after fulfilling an engagement at Bristol, under the management of the elder Macready, he visited Holland. At Amsterdam he played *Macbeth* several times by special request of the Prince of Orange, who was present at each repetition of that character, and witnessed also his performance of *Iago*, on which occasion Mr. S. Chapman enacted *Othello*.

After performing in Rotterdam, Brussels, etc., Booth sailed from the former place for America, in the ship “Draper,” Captain Hilliert. Possessing a facility of acquiring languages, he had made himself master of many tongues. Greek, Latin, and French were the acquisition of his college days, German and Spanish he studied in maturer years, and Arabic he endeavored to acquire in age. On this homeward voyage in 1827 he was occupied in the study of Italian. It was his habit to set himself a task consisting of a certain number of

words which he had previously written on slips of paper, and, as he walked the deck of the vessel, to commit them to memory.

An unfortunate passenger who was allowed free access to all parts of the vessel, and who, although insane, was not considered dangerous, conceived the idea that Mr. Booth was a conjurer, and practising the black art upon him. One day, while the unconscious student was in his cabin, his black girl rushed in, exclaiming, —

“The crazy man is coming with an axe !”

He turned toward the door just in time to catch the glance of the intruder. With the unflinching gaze of self-possession, he fixed the eye of the maniac, who gradually lowered the weapon, and, letting it fall behind him, walked slowly away.

Mr. Booth, on his return to America, made his first appearance, on the 24th of March, 1827, at the Park Theatre, New York, and played successively *Richard*, *Sir Giles Overreach*, *Sir Edward Mortimer*, *Posthumus*, *Reuben Glenroy*, and, for his benefit, *Selim*, in the “Bride of Abydos,” and *Ferry Sneak*. In the month of June he again performed at the Park, appearing for his benefit as *Pescara*, in the “Apostate,” — a character written expressly for him by Sheil, and which he had at first declined. The elder Conway represented *Hemeya* on this occasion.

Mr. Gould, in “The Tragedian,” says of the performance: “Certainly in the personation of *Pescara* Booth drew off some of that spirit which filled his *Iago*, adulterated it with Shiel, and offered it with great acceptance to the rank palate of a popular audience, —

‘Darkening his power to lend base subjects light.’

Yet the flashing and magnetic eye ; the crisp, resonant, and changeful tones ; the natural attitudes of easy power ; the lithe strength in action, always characteristic of Booth, — lent their wonted charm to this performance also, and made *Pescara* yield a transitory delight.”

In 1828 he consented to undertake the stage management of the Camp Street Theatre, New Orleans, under the lesseeship of his friend, Mr. Caldwell. He played *Richard III.* for sixteen nights to densely crowded houses. During his leisure hours he had perfected himself in several French dramas, playing, among other parts, *Faïel* in “Gabrielle De Vergey,” *Tancréd*, *Shakspeare* in “Shakspeare Amoureux” ; and being a proficient in the French language, he was solicited by Mr. Davis, of the Théâtre d’Orléans, to play *Orestes*, in Racine’s tragedy of “Andromaque.” His accentuation was so perfect, and every peculiarity of French acting was so minutely observed by him, that the astonishment and delight were universal. At the close of the performance he was loudly called for, and cries of “Talma ! Talma !” saluted him, amid every sound of applause and approbation.

His copy of the play of “Andromaque” is profusely marked with stage directions, and is accentuated in his own handwriting. A note of reference is made to the fact that “the rôle of *Oreste* cost the life of the celebrated actor Montfleuri, who enacted it with such force that he exhausted his powers.”

The following is a copy of the bill of Mr. Booth’s performance : —

THÉÂTRE D'ORLÉANS.

MR. BOOTH !

Aujourd'hui Mardi, 19 Février, 1828.

Une représentation

D'ANDROMAQUE,

Tragédie en 5 actes et en vers de Racine, dans laquelle
M. Booth jouera le rôle d'Oreste.

DISTRIBUTION :

Oreste, fils d'Agamemnon	M. Booth.
Pyrrhus, fils d'Achille, roi d'Epire	M. Leblanc.
Pylade, ami d'Oreste	Tabary.
Phœnix, gouverneur de Pyrrhus	Rochefort.
Andromaque, V've d'Hector	Mme. Cholet.
Hermione	" Clozel.
Cléone, confidente d'Andromaque	" Placide.
Cephise, confidente d'Hermione	" Bolzé.

"L'administration ayant pensé que les talens de M. Booth, célèbre tragédien Anglais, seraient agréables au public, dont elle s'empressera toujours de prévenir les desirs, a engagé cet artiste à jouer, avant son départ de cette ville, le rôle d'Oreste dans la belle tragédie d'Andromaque de Racine. Mme. Cholet a bien voulu se charger du rôle difficile d'Andromaque pour ne pas faire manquer cette représentation."

A New Orleans paper said : "A spectacle of deep interest — one as novel as it was pleasing — was offered last Tuesday night in the Orleans Theatre, to the lovers of dramatic talents. Yielding to the sollicitations of several gentlemen of this city, Mr. Booth consented to present himself before a French audience in the part of *Orestes*. This effort, perilous in the extreme, and which nothing but a wish to give to Frenchmen an op-

portunity of judging fairly of what is termed the *English style of tragic acting* could have urged Mr. Booth to risk, has been crowned with the most flattering success. The ever-increasing interest excited by the warmth of his feelings, the earnestness of his manner, and the impetuous ardor of his delivery, and, above all, whenever passion rose high, when the furies goaded *Orestes* to crimes, criticism was merged in admiration, and with one voice all wondered that a stranger should thus feel and express all the beauties of Racine."

Mr. Davis offered him three hundred dollars per night for a period of twelve nights, but prior engagements would not allow him to remain for so long a term. An arrangement was however effected for a repetition of "*Andromaque*" on Thursday, 21st. The announcement is taken from the *New Orleans Courier* of that date : —

"Mr. Booth, highly gratified for the manner in which he was received by the audience of the Orleans Theatre, has yielded to the request of the administration, that he would again play the part of *Orestes* before his departure, in order to afford those who could not procure boxes for the first representation an opportunity of witnessing his performance.

Mr. Booth's Second Appearance.

ANDROMAQUE ;

To be followed by

THE WATER PORTER'S FAMILY,

by Scribe."

He then proceeded to Natchez and Nashville, and afterward passed a week with General Jackson at the Hermitage, where the time was pleasantly spent in congenial society, varied with readings from Shakspeare and the poets. He next went to Cincinnati, where he played a very lucrative engagement.

In 1831 he engaged to perform at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, under the management of Mr. Dana, who was evidently unaccustomed to theatrical business, as the careless arrangement of his affairs indicated. He frequently engaged stars to perform a similar character on the same evening, and in this manner Mr. Booth and Mr. Hamblin both arrived according to their separate agreements, each claiming the house. The former, being the more attractive, was selected, and Mr. Hamblin received a hundred dollars per night, remaining in town the specified period of his engagement.

In speaking of the beautiful reading of Mr. Booth, the author of "The Actor" makes the following comment: —

"We will here record an incident related to the writer by the late Mr. Simmons, whose lectures on elocution and dramatic poetry are well remembered by the public. After witnessing one of Mr. Booth's splendid efforts in Boston, he introduced himself to Mr. Booth, and acknowledged the pleasure he had derived from listening to his beautiful readings, and requested that they might read together.

"Accordingly a chapter was selected from the Bible, 'and *never*,' said the gifted lecturer, '*was I before so struck with the eloquence, beauty, and power of the pas-*

sages read by the great actor. His fine features glowed with the fire of genius as he poured out his rich, melodious tones, apparently completely absorbed by the subject. Late as it was, I could have sat the night through listening to eloquence till then unheard, and of which before I had no conception.' "

Returning to Baltimore, Mr. Booth met his old friend, Thomas Flynn, who had recently arrived from England. Mr. Flynn had arranged to open the Annapolis Theatre, then in course of erection, and proposed to him to play an engagement there, offering a clear third of each night's receipts. In due time Mr. Booth proceeded to Annapolis; but instead of taking the usual mode of conveyance, he went in a wood-sloop, and did not arrive until a week after the time announced. The engagement proved a profitable one, and the theatre was nightly filled by the most fashionable people.

In the month of September, 1831, he accepted an offer from Mr. Simpson to act two nights with Mr. Forrest at the Park Theatre, New York. On the first occasion Booth performed *Pierre*, in "Venice Preserved," and Forrest *Jaffier*; the second night Booth acted *Othello*, and Forrest *Iago*,—the theatre being completely crowded to witness the great favorites in the two productions. Mr. Booth frequently expressed his admiration of Mr. Forrest's rendition of both *Othello* and *Iago*.

About this time Mr. Booth had obtained the lease of the Adelphi Theatre, Baltimore, and had engaged Mr. Flynn as his acting manager. He had designed opening it early in September, 1831; but as the building had

been undergoing extensive repairs, and was still in an unfinished state, Mr. Booth rented the Holliday Street Theatre until his own was completed. The principal members of his company were Messrs. Flynn, Cooper, Duff, Warren, Roberts, Finn, Mrs. Duff, and Mrs. Flynn.

During the season Charles Kean made his début before a Baltimore audience as *Richard III.* "Hamlet" was produced with the following powerful cast, Mr. Booth accepting the part of *Second Actor* : —

Hamlet	Mr. C. Kean.
Ghost	Mr. Duff.
Polonius	Mr. Warren.
Laertes	Mr. Archer.
King	Mr. Isherwood.
Horatio	Mr. Hazard.
Osric	Mr. J. Sefton.
First Grave-Digger	Mr. Flynn.
Second Grave-Digger	Mr. Mercer.
First Actor	Mr. McKinney.
Second Actor	Mr. Booth.
Ophelia	Mrs. Flynn.
Queen	Mrs. Duff.

"Booth gave the actor's speech with great effect. The audience rose *en masse*, and cheered him to the echo, as much for the beauty of its delivery as the modesty which induced him to select a subordinate character, thus bringing into effect the entire strength of his company, and extending every advantage to the distinguished stranger."

During the season, which was a very prosperous one, he played several new characters, among which

were *Roderick Dhu*, *Selim*, *Richard II.*, *Penruddock*, *Falkland*, in the "Rivals," *Hotspur*, and *Luke*, in "Riches." His *Luke* and other characters are thus criticised : —

"His representation of *Luke* is original and beautiful. The assumption of the lowly penitent after a course of extravagance and folly is among the most lifelike scenes ever portrayed by this master of the passions. Who that has witnessed his representation can ever forget his hypocritical plea for mercy when discovered in his treachery, and his sudden, tiger-like spring after finding it disregarded, and the bold transition from the fawning suppliant to the daring ruffian, defying, even in defeat, his injured brother? His representation of this character alone would stamp him superior to any actor on the stage. His *Reuben Glenroy* is also much admired for its chaste and beautiful performance. In tender passages, the mournful and touching cadences of his voice appeal directly to the heart; and in the representation of sterner passages, his acting approximates to the sublime.

"As *Richard the Third*, *Pescara*, *Sir Giles Overreach*, *Sir Edward Mortimer*, *Shylock*, and *Iago*, he is without an equal.

"His fifth act of *Iago* was a most exquisite portrayal of character; although *Othello* in this scene usually engrosses the attention of the audience, and *Iago* has but few lines to utter, yet with Junius Brutus Booth as the crafty villain, cowed, entrapped, with all his evil passions glowering in his face, we have seen his auditors fascinated as it were with horror, oblivious of all other

characters on the stage, and seizing the first pause in the action of the scene to vent their feelings in rapturous applause. The secret workings of *Iago's* mind flashed in those powerful eyes ; the face reddened with suppressed rage, then turned livid with hate ; and the bitter intensity with which he expressed the lines, —

‘Demand me nothing ; what you know, you know :
From this time forth I never will speak word,’

was marvellous.

“ During the remainder of the scene his countenance revealed what the tongue disdained to speak, and retained its magnetic influence upon the beholders until his final exit.”

John Howard Payne thus criticises his performance of *Sir Edward Mortimer*, in the play of the “ Iron Chest ” : —

“ We must own we have never seen either that character, or Booth in his palmiest days, with more unmixed delight. The perturbations of a spirit generous and grand by nature, and idolizing popularity, but racked with a heavy and agonizing and damning secret, and jealously and unslumberingly on the alert for symptoms of its being suspected, were pictured with the genius and the power of a master. So was the whirlwind of despair at the withering secret’s final detection. There was variety and truth in the artist’s enunciation and attitudes and countenance, and these qualities were carried even to the expression of the hands, which, could they have been disjoined from that of the rest of his person, at any one point of the passion, would at a

glance have disclosed to an instructed eye the Hercules in his art. This manual eloquence (if we may venture such a phrase) escapes imitation, even in painting and sculpture, by mediocrity, but, if ever studied, as equally precious and difficult by those who know how to excel. Last evening Mr. Booth displayed it with surpassing skill."

Mr. James E. Murdock, in his very entertaining book, "The Stage," recently published, gives a graphic account of his first appearance with Mr. Booth. He says : —

"Of all the men with whom my professional duties made me acquainted, no one, perhaps, impressed me so strongly as the elder Booth. There was something peculiar about him that acted like a charm, and commanded the respect and won the esteem of all whose advances he encouraged ; but he was, nevertheless, generally undemonstrative and shy. A morbid tendency of feeling, which gave rise to wild and defiant moods, led him at times to things at variance with the conventionalities of society, and entirely opposed to his well-known gentlemanly character ; and these eccentricities caused coldness and reserve both with himself and his friends. But when the ' cloud ' passed, and his true nature asserted itself, Booth was capable of winning the love of many and the esteem of all. His literary tastes and abilities were of a high order, while his mental qualities were remarkable for clearness and range. I remember the first time I was brought into direct contact with the magnetic influence by which he ruled the dramatic scene and swayed his audience. I was quite

a lad, and had not been on the stage more than a year or two when I was selected to play *Wilford* to his *Sir Edward Mortimer* for the first time. Booth's face, before he met with the accident which disfigured his nose, was of surpassing beauty, and, speaking in the spirit of enthusiasm, to my mind's eye it always realized the ideal grandeur represented in *Hamlet's* lines : —

‘ See what a grace was seated on this brow :
Hyperion's curls ; the front of Jove himself ;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command.’

Such was the impression made on my youthful mind in gazing for the first time on Booth's features when dressed for *Sir Edward Mortimer*. The sweetness of a settled melancholy was in his face, while his large, lustrous eye was full of gentle tenderness. But I was destined to see that face and eye in a different light, and to realize a very different feeling from that of quiet admiration.

“ On the morning of the rehearsal I found the great tragedian pleasant and communicative, and as I was anxious to learn the business of the scene and to execute it to the satisfaction of my superior, I was attentive and deeply interested. My readers will call to mind the relations of *Sir Edward Mortimer* and his young secretary. The latter was taken from an inferior position in life and elevated to the confidence and friendship of his patron, over whom hung — that fascination to the young — a profound mystery. With that mystery was connected an iron chest which *Sir Edward* was known to visit often, and always alone, returning from

such visits with evident marks of the deepest agitation.

“One day *Wilford*, being engaged in the secluded apartment where the chest was kept, with surprise observed that the key was in the lock. After overcoming honest scruples in a long struggle with fatal curiosity, he knelt before the mysterious chest and turned the key ; then hesitating for a moment he searched the apartment in order to be satisfied that he was secure from observation. Now the stage business Mr. Booth was so particular in teaching me was this : I was enjoined to take time, and after a careful survey of the premises to kneel on one knee, place my left hand on the lid of the chest, then, gently raising it, to hold it back, and, looking closely in, to place my right hand on the papers which it contained, turning them over as if seeking for something hidden beneath. The strictest injunction was given to pay no attention to what was to follow on the part of *Sir Edward*, no matter how long the suspense might last, but when I felt his hand upon my shoulder to turn abruptly, letting the lid of the chest fall with a slam, and, still on my knee, hold a firm attitude till I was warned, by a sudden pressure of Mr. Booth’s hand, to rise to my feet and stand before him.

“On the night of the performance I was nervous and ill at ease from the want of a firm and assured hold upon the words of my part, which I had mastered at short notice and with more attention to the sense than to special expression. However I contrived to keep up with the action of the play. At length I found myself in the presence of the mysterious chest. I was

almost breathless with excitement and from anxiety consequent on my strong desire to execute Mr. Booth's orders to the very letter. I had proceeded so far as to open the chest, and stooping over the papers awaited trembling on my knee the appointed signal for action. The time seemed an eternity, but it came at last. The heavy hand fell on my shoulder. I turned, and there, with the pistol held to my head, stood Booth glaring like an infuriated demon. Then for the first time I comprehended the reality of acting. The fury of that passion-flamed face and the magnetism of the rigid clutch upon my arm paralyzed my muscles, while the scintillating gleam of the terrible eyes, like the green and red flashes of an enraged serpent, fascinated and fixed me spell-bound to the spot. A sudden revulsion of feeling caused me to spring from my knees, but, bewildered with fright, and a choking sensation of undefined dread, I fell heavily to the stage, tripping Mr. Booth, who still clutched my shoulder. I brought him down with me, and for a moment we lay prostrate. But suddenly recovering himself he sprang to his feet, with almost superhuman strength dragging me up, as I clung to his arm in terror. Shaking himself free of my grasp, I sank down again, stunned and helpless. I was aroused to consciousness, however, by a voice calling me in suppressed accents to rise, and then became aware that Mr. Booth was kneeling at my side. He helped me to my feet, whispering in my ear a few encouraging words, and then dexterously managed in spite of the accident, and my total inability to speak, to continue the scene to its close.

“ Thus was I, an unfortunate tyro, saved from disgrace by the coolness and kindness of one who had every reason to be moved by a very different state of mind ; for it was evident that, but for the actor’s readiness and skill in improvising the business of the stage, one of the most important and interesting scenes of the play would have proved a mortifying failure. The kindness of the act was its own reward, for my present recollection is that the audience never evinced the slightest indication of the presence of a disturbing element, but on the contrary gave evidence of their satisfaction by applause at the critical moment to which I have alluded. In more than one way Booth was a true poetic genius and dramatic artist. He always seemed to grasp the ideal beauty and intellectual power of the poet’s thought, and worked out from the author’s language the full force of the emotion or passion which was the root of its mental growth. Thus mastering the intent and purpose of the words, he invested their utterance with the graceful foliage or the more vigorous strength of branch and limb from the power of his varied and wonderful forms of expression. This he seemed to do apparently with so much real enjoyment of the poet’s innermost feelings that the fervor of a gratified sense seized upon his hearers, and established a congenial and sympathetic communion with the enthusiasm of the actor.”

In January, 1832, Mr. Booth opened at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in “ Sertorius,” a new play written by the eminent lawyer, David Paul Brown. This performance is spoken of as being exquisitely

beautiful, and the tragedy one of great interest and sublimity. At the termination of this engagement he visited professionally New Orleans, Mobile, Louisville, and Cincinnati. In 1833 the following letter was addressed to his father. His letters generally present a curious combination of theology, metaphysics, hygiene, and farming.

FRIDAY EVE.

DEAR FATHER, — The weather was so bad that the managers closed the house on Wednesday evening. I had to play on Thursday, in lieu of it, and again to-night. As Joe will want "Fanny" to finish the ploughing, I send her home. Let the gentleman who bears this have "Peacock" to ride back to Baltimore. Let Joe sow the timothy in the meadow. Tell Junius not to go opossum hunting, or setting rabbit-traps, but to let the poor devils live. Cruelty is the offspring of idleness of mind and beastly ignorance, and, in children, should be repressed and not encouraged, as is too often the case, by unthinking beings who surround them. A thief, who takes property from another, has it in his power, should he repent, to make a restoration; but the robber of life never can give back what he has wantonly and sacrilegiously taken from beings perhaps innocent, and equally capable of enjoying pleasure or suffering torture with himself. The ideas of Pythagoras I have adopted; and as respects our accountability to animals hereafter, nothing that man can preach can make me believe to the contrary. "Every death its own avenger breeds." Enough of this. I think there is some parsnip-seed hanging in a paper, by the look-

ing-glass, in the parlor. Let Joe sow some, on manure, in small trenches, in the garden, — say three or four rows.

Read the wondrous tale of “Alroy,” by D’Israeli. He was, in the twelfth century, the Jewish Messiah, and, but for a woman, the daughter of a robber’s daughter, would have given *us*, perhaps, another religion, as all were obliged, by the theocracy, who were his ministers and supporters, to embrace the Hebrew faith, or die. Junius is a good boy, and will make a scholar of no mean capacity. I hope you enjoy health, and take my theory founded on positive experience, as respects going to sleep. Rise early, walk, or use some exercise in the open air, and, when going to bed, drink a *warm* liquid, — either weak grog, gruel, or even water; drink nearly or quite a pint at one draught. Lie down directly, and in fifteen minutes you will sink into a comfortable lethargy. Coffee and tea, however, must be avoided, as they prevent sleep. A slice of bread-and-butter, and an onion or lettuce for supper, prior to this potation, is good, — much opium, and of a harmless quantity, being contained in the latter vegetable.

God bless you. I hope soon to see you again.

Your affectionate son,

J. B. BOOTH.

Mr. Booth entered into an engagement with Mr. Hamblin, to play three nights a week for the period of a year. The Richmond Theatre was taken for this purpose, and a part of the company proceeded in a

stage-coach to Baltimore. On the road to Belair the stage broke down, and the party, including Miss Vincent, Messrs. Hamblin, Flynn, Phillips, and others, were compelled to remain over night at the Farm. They walked a long distance to the cottage, and evidently disturbed the monotony of forest life, for the servants who had grown gray on the place were wont to tell of the merry players who, many years ago, made such an unceremonious visit. The stillness of the woods soon became oppressive to the jovial guests, while to the master of these solitudes the faintest sound of insect, breeze, or brook, was full of a joyous mystery, and he manifested surprise when asked by one of the party, "Booth, how can you exist in such a wilderness?"

On the following afternoon the company proceeded to Baltimore, and, arriving in Richmond, opened to a crowded house. Mr. Booth became the subject of a newspaper controversy, arising from his refusal to answer the call of the audience at the fall of the curtain. On the fourth night of his engagement he received intelligence of the dangerous illness of one of his children, and abruptly left the city without assigning the reason for his departure. The child lived only a short time after his arrival, and was buried in the little graveyard on the Farm. Mr. Booth then proceeded to Baltimore with the intention of completing his engagement in Richmond, but was there informed that the theatre was closed, and that Mr. Hamblin had gone to New York. Being detained in Baltimore for several days by the snow, a letter arrived from Belair requesting his

immediate return to the sick-bed of another of his children. He arrived only in time to witness her death. The loss of this child was the culmination of his sorrow, for his mind became entirely unsettled for a time and a painful illness followed.

While the bereaved mother braced every nerve to nurse her remaining children, and the father had quite succumbed to his affliction, Mr. Hamblin, unaware how grief had settled over the little farm, and unable by the heavy snow-storms to effect any communication with that retired place, had brought a lawsuit against Mr. Booth for breaking his engagement. His father, Richard Booth, determined at this crisis to stop proceedings by going at once to Philadelphia. Distressed and infirm as the old gentleman was, he set out upon the tedious journey with alacrity, not heeding the inclement weather. Old Joe accompanied him as protector and waiting-man ; such confidence was placed in the integrity of this *slave for life* by his legal owner, that consent was readily given for him to accompany his master ; the fact being well known to all parties that the slave could assert his freedom as soon as he touched the soil of Pennsylvania. With laudable pride the old man used to tell how he repaid his owner's confidence by returning home. He died in slavery, — a true-hearted, faithful, good old man, enjoying the respect of all who knew him ; he never murmured at his own bondage, but with his small earnings he bought the freedom of his wife, so that of their numerous family only four of her children were born free, the others being slaves to his wife's master until the age of twenty-four.

The threatened lawsuit was amicably adjusted, when, on recovery from a severe illness, Mr. Booth consented to perform three nights a week during a period of three months, at the Bowery Theatre, New York. This theatre at that time was in its palmy days under Mr. Hamblin's management, and was conducted in a manner superior to the Park. Mr. Booth opened with "Richard III." to a house yielding thirteen hundred dollars. He engaged to play on the intervening nights at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, under the direction of Mr. Duffy, for the space of one month, Mr. Booth playing alternately in the two cities and travelling the intermediate distance by stage-coach. The last night of this engagement in Philadelphia he acted *Oroonoko*, and as he was hurrying through the performance he fancied some dissatisfaction was expressed by the audience. He arose, after *killing himself*, and walking to the footlights exclaimed, "I'll serve you as General Jackson did : I'll *veto* you." At this period the celebrated veto messages of General Jackson were creating great excitement in political circles.

Mr. Booth went from New York to New Orleans, thence to Mobile, and afterward through the Western cities. During this tour the calamity which seemed to increase in strength and frequency with maturer years, assumed many singular phases. In the records of his youth, when his profession held every incentive to ambition, energy, and indefatigable labor, — when his habits were most temperate and abstemious, — we occasionally find those slight aberrations of mind which

mark that exquisite turning-point between genius and madness. To those accustomed to the intense excitability of peculiar temperaments, who see how the brain of the actor is wrought upon by the assumption of harrowing, though fictitious scenes, and who feel how frequently the delineator of the passions thinks, dreams, exists in a sphere of ideality, it is neither strange nor difficult to comprehend how such minds are overthrown by the reaction, and oftentimes ruined utterly ;

“ Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.”

Thus from early youth his children learned from their mother, the devoted and unwearying nurse of him who endured these periodical tortures of mind, to regard these seasons of abstraction with sad and reverent forbearance.

Mr. Booth, at the conclusion of this tour, commenced an engagement in New York on the 29th of August, 1836, at the National Theatre, situated on the corner of Leonard and Church Streets, under the management of Mr. Flynn. The first night he performed *Shylock*, when the receipts were sixteen hundred dollars ; and he played eight nights to houses almost equally crowded. The intellect and fashion of the city nightly filled the theatre. He visited Philadelphia and Baltimore, and in October sailed with his family for Europe.

He was engaged on arrival to play three nights at Drury Lane Theatre for twenty-five pounds a night, opening as *Richard*. He played *Iago* the second evening, and repeated *Richard* on the third. He after-

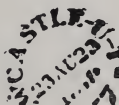


4) *Dear Miss Thackeray*
R. W. Einton Esq
Stratford Place
London

£

W. Booth

J. H. Booth
Amman
1841



3/11

W. Booth n. Type - 22.

May theapture you hold, never prove
 barren! — A l'égard de Madame Syren
 you ask — is she short? — no — tall? —
 inclining to be so — dark — ^{with} a commanding
 Eye — expressive face, and well moulded
 figure — possesses considerable Energy &
 a powerful voice, without ranting —
 If you were to write what opening you
 could make for her and on what
 conditions, she can use her reason, & need
 not be affrayed — Either I mistake your
 remark, or am totally wrong in my ideas
 of acting, that mediocre Talent will

appear to greater advantage with
bad Performers, than good ones --
With the former, in my humble
conception - the highest Talent
must be depreciated - and mediocre
Talent stands more in need of
ability in its supporters: ~~then~~
keep the Ball in motion - It must
be innate - & great Merit that can
shake off the Trammels, the
injustice & neglect of the World
so readily load it with -
Je suis qu'en Action ambulant & pas
un Chevalier! Adieu!

Yours truly
Samuel B. Booth

ward played a brief engagement at the Surrey Theatre, going thence to Sadlers Wells.

While performing in Birmingham he received news of the death of a favorite son, Henry Byron Booth, whom he had left with his family in London. The grave of this son is in the churchyard at Pentonville (near that of Grimaldi). On the stone erected by Mr. Booth are the beautiful lines taken from Southey's "Doctor," —

"Oh, even in spite of death, yet still my choice,
Oft with the inward, all-beholding eye,
I think I see thee, and I hear thy voice."

The following letter refers to this bereavement : —

PENTONVILLE, Jan. 28, 1837.

DEAR FATHER, — We have at last cause, and severe it is, to regret coming to England. I have delayed writing till time had somewhat softened the horror of the event. Our dear little Henry is dead ! He caught the small-pox, and it proved fatal ; he has been buried about three weeks, in the Chapel ground, close by. Think what his loss has been to us, — so proud as I was of him above all others. The infernal disease has placed Hagar [a slave] in the hospital. Edwin and the baby* were inoculated and are getting well. I

* The "baby" alluded to in this letter was not named until she was nearly two years old, it being a matter of discussion whether to call her after the accomplished young Sydney Cowell (Mrs. Bateman), who was a great favorite with Mr. and Mrs. Booth, or Ayesha, in recollection of one of Mahomet's wives. Finally the decision was made by Mr. Booth writing to his wife, — "Call the little one *Asia* in remembrance of that

shall play a few nights more in London, and at Edinburgh before I return. Forrest won't play any more, — at least he says so now. Hamblin is here ; so are Barrett of Boston, Ternan of Philadelphia, and Rice ; the only one, it appears, who has really bettered his fortunes in London is *he*. *Jim Crow*, one would have thought, the Cockneys could not understand, but contrary to all calculation it is the mania amongst them.

Hoping you are in health, and may long continue so, is the prayer of

Your affectionate son,

J. B. BOOTH.

After this melancholy loss he started with his family for America on the ship "Ontario." On his arrival in New York, he acted at the Bowery Theatre on the night of the 4th of July, 1837, receiving two hundred dollars for the performance, which closed the season. In the fall of the year he fulfilled an engagement at the Olympic in New York, and on the third night he appeared as *Richard III.*, W. R. Blake enacting *Richmond*, Mrs. Blake *Queen Elizabeth*, and Master Louis Blake the *Duke of York*. The theatre was brilliantly illuminated in commemoration of the evacuation of New York by the British.

Mr. Booth was engaged to perform in New York at the Bowery on the 18th of February, 1838, but on arriving in the city was astonished to find the building in

country where God first walked with man, and *Frigga*, because she came to us on Friday, which day is consecrated to the Northern Venus."

ruins. A benefit was given at the Park for the aid of the sufferers by the conflagration, and he volunteered to act on the occasion. At the rise of the curtain he was missing, and Mr. Flynn finally discovered him at a fire in William Street, laboring at an engine, in the endeavor, as he said, "to save people's property from destruction."

He subsequently visited the South on a professional tour, accompanied by Mr. Thomas Flynn. They embarked in the steamer "Neptune." Mr. Booth was observed to be very melancholy on the voyage, and talked frequently of Conway, who, in a fit of depression, had committed suicide by jumping into the sea. When the vessel neared the place where the unfortunate actor had perished, he came hurriedly on deck, saying he had a message for Conway, and leaped into the ocean. A boat was immediately lowered, and with difficulty he was rescued from a watery grave. After he was safe in the boat, his first words, according to Mr. Flynn's report, were, "I say, Tom, look out: you're a heavy man, — be steady; if the boat upsets we'll all be drowned."

It was during this Charleston trip that his nose was broken, spoiling the beauty of his countenance, and giving to his harmonious voice a nasal tone.

Mr. Gould thus speaks of this occurrence: "The accident by which his nose was broken, spoiling forever his noble profile, threatened for a time the more serious disaster of a permanent injury to his voice. Immediately on recovery he began to play. To those who, during these first performances, recalled the per-

fect features and the resonant tones of former years, the sight and sound were indeed pitiful. The head tones were scarcely perceptible. But instead of humoring this vocal infirmity he spoke with all the old mastery of motive, and let the result take care of itself. By this persistent method, in less than two years after the accident his voice had completely recovered its original scope, variety, and power; as we can attest by close, solicitous, and comparative observation."

During the last ten years of his life the elder Booth passed a considerable portion of his time in the midst of his family, occasionally making professional tours with a careless disregard of fame, which may be accounted for by the depressing consciousness of the accident which had marred his face and voice. It was, however, a marked peculiarity of his entire career that he would consent to perform at any theatre regardless of its pretensions, and was equally unconcerned about the costliness or grandeur of his wardrobe, so long as it was correct in point of fashion and of date. He played annually in Boston and New Orleans, in which places he was an established favorite, and, having removed his residence to Baltimore, made periodical visits to the Farm during the oppressive heat of summer.

He indulged his philanthropic inclinations unrestrainedly, and the particulars of some charitable visit or donation would frequently be disclosed to the family by the grateful recipient.

The writer's earliest recollection of her father, when she was four years of age, is seeing him upon his knees before a rough sailor who had asked alms at the door.

The poor fellow had a bad wound on his leg which was suffering from neglect, and Mr. Booth brought him into the house, and washed and bandaged the injured limb with the tenderest care.

These little deeds of kindness were of almost daily occurrence. He thus sought to impress upon the minds of his children the lessons of humanity to man and beast more by his own acts than by precept. He delighted to seek out the destitute and unfortunate, and to aid them by his sympathy as well as by his bounty.

It was on one of these errands of mercy that the horse thief, Fontaine, alias Lovett, was pointed out to him. Lovett was then confined in the Louisville jail. It was remarked that he had no means of obtaining counsel, and Mr. Booth, although assured that his case was hopeless, sent him a lawyer and defrayed the expenses of his trial; for which kindness, when Lovett heard of it, he bequeathed him his skull, desiring "that it should be given after his execution to the actor Booth, with the request that he would use it on the stage in 'Hamlet,' and think, when he held it in his hands, of the gratitude his kindness had awakened."

The skull was accordingly sent to his residence while he was absent from the city, but Mrs. Booth, finding what a horrible thing had been left in her house, immediately returned it to the doctor to whom it had been intrusted for preparation and delivery. (In 1857 the doctor, who had retained the skull, sent it to Edwin Booth, who used it in the graveyard scene in "Hamlet" on several occasions, and afterward had it buried.)

In the year 1850 the elder Booth played several engagements at the National Theatre, Chatham Street, New York. At this time the Broadway Theatre, now demolished, was the only establishment on Broadway strictly devoted to the regular drama. A misunderstanding having occurred between Mr. Marshall, the lessee, and Mr. Booth, he was prevailed upon by Mr. Purdy, of the National, to accept an engagement with him. He was supported by John R. Scott, H. A. Perry, and a superior company. The house was nightly crowded with his admirers. Subsequently, he made his last appearance in New York at this theatre, on the 19th of September, 1851, playing *Shylock* and *Sir Edward Mortimer*.

In Washington, in 1850, Mr. Booth performed *Brutus*, and his son Edwin, *Titus*. The author, John Howard Payne, witnessed the performance. In Richmond, Va., shortly afterward the same play was repeated, father and son assuming the same characters. In the solemn interview between them, where the Roman Consul is condemning his son to an ignominious death, his countenance portrayed an agony of suffering, and tears streamed from his eyes as he took the head of his recreant boy to his bosom. The audience was breathless from intensity of feeling, when the silence was suddenly broken by an exclamation from a drunken man in the gallery. Mr. Booth, still absorbed in the part, raised his eyes and, gazing fixedly towards the gallery, said sternly, "Beware! I am the headsman, I am the executioner." The effect thus produced was shown in the continued silence of the audience, which greatly

added to the solemnity of the scene. This complete identification with the characters was one of the subtle charms of his acting; his clear and vigorous mind could imbue itself with the varied tints of another's personality, holding its own individuality in reserve, or as it were subservient. An eminent actor once remarked of Mr. Booth "that he was always within the picture;" and in the soul of the character, might well be added, — unlike Boileau's easily recognized writer, who, "inspired by self-love, forms all his heroes like himself."

In 1851 Mr. Booth performed a variety of characters at the old Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. Mr. James E. Murdock appeared as *Falconbridge* to his *King John*, *Jaffier* to his *Pierre*, *Antony* to his *Cæsar*. Mr. Booth acted *Pescara*, and Miss Jean Davenport *Florinda*. "The Merchant of Venice" was then produced. Mr. Booth arrived at the theatre unusually early, and immediately prepared himself for the part. At the rising of the curtain *Shylock* was not to be found, although he had been previously observed by persons behind the scenes. Mr. Fredericks, the stage-manager, was in perplexity, and the actors generally were confused and anxious.

It was decided that the performance should commence and continue uninterruptedly to the time of *Shylock's* entrance (which does not occur until nearly the close of the first act), meanwhile every effort should be employed to discover the "Wandering Jew," and if he did not come in due time the stage-manager's favorite walking gentleman should address the audience and expose "Mr. Booth's unprincipled conduct."

The much dreaded time arrived, and *Shylock* had not appeared. Messengers had been despatched to various localities, and the theatre had undergone a thorough search. Mr. Fredericks was in a most unenviable state of excitement, and the apologist was ready with his speech, when at the exact point of time the door of a dark scene-closet was quietly opened from the interior, and *Shylock* mysteriously emerged therefrom, gently pushed Mr. Fredericks aside, and walked slowly and in deep reflection upon the stage.

The stage-manager, stricken with amazement, vanished into the green-room, where he related the astonishing behavior of Booth, vowing that "he was always an enigma,—that he never could understand him." As he had not recently appeared in the character of *Shylock*, he was consequently more than ordinarily nervous on this occasion, and had dressed early and retired to the most secluded spot he could find, in order to go over his part without interruption. He was quite innocent of having created any uneasiness or confusion, and consequently walked out of the darkness, completely engrossed in the part.

In the spring of 1852, Junius Booth, his son, who had been for several years a resident of California, came home on a visit to the family, and with the intention of taking his father back with him; as he had been earnestly solicited by the Californians to induce him to go to that country. They left New York in June, accompanied by Edwin Booth. In thirty-seven days they reached San Francisco, having lost eight days by detention in Panama.

Mr. Booth opened at the Jenny Lind Theatre, and attracted crowded audiences for two weeks, when the engagement was imperatively terminated, the site of the theatre having been previously purchased for the erection of a City Hall. He then went up the river to fulfil an engagement at Sacramento, where the patronage of the public was comparatively small, and his reception, though cordial, was not so rapturous and enthusiastic as that which greeted him in San Francisco. In September he again performed in San Francisco, and attracted overflowing houses at the Adelphi Theatre. In these California engagements Edwin Booth acted in nearly all of his father's pieces, appearing as *Richmond*, *Laertes*, *Hemey*, and *Jaffier*.

Mr. Booth suddenly resolved to return to the "States," and insisted on his son remaining to pursue the profession he had chosen. Of late years he had frequently expressed his intention of retiring from active life, and as a sad intimation that the idea had weight with him, he gave his *Richard's* diadem — an ornament that had been for years a treasure of considerable care — to his eldest son, saying that he should not need it. This resignation of the crown was painfully remembered in connection with that final event so soon to distress them, yet he parted from his sons in excellent health and spirits, looking hopefully forward to reaching home. He had engaged his passage on the "Brother Jonathan," and on the morning of starting, while anxiously superintending the transportation of his baggage to the boat, he was somewhat annoyed at the dilatory manner of a rough, surly sailor who was executing the work,

and kindly urged the man to show more alacrity ; but, observing that he obstinately moved slower, and was disposed to be insolent, he inquired sharply, "What are you employed for? who are you?"

The seaman with a vicious look gruffly replied, "I am a *thief*."

Mr. Booth, with a quick intuition of character, immediately exclaimed, "Give me your hand, comrade ; I am a pirate !"

The man looked abashed, yet, evidently recognizing the spirit of kindliness which prompted such a response, extended his hand in silence.

On his arrival in New Orleans in November, feeling well and vigorous, he accepted an engagement at the St. Charles Theatre. He performed six nights, and was greeted with thronged and enthusiastic audiences, but could not be prevailed upon to extend his engagement, as he was desirous of reaching home. His last appearance was as *Sir Edward Mortimer* in the "Iron Chest" and as *John Lump*.

Being greatly exhausted after the performance, it is supposed that he contracted a cold, which rapidly grew worse. He took passage for Cincinnati on the "J. S. Chenoweth," and becoming in a few days very feverish, he drank freely of the Mississippi water, which greatly increased his disorder. There was no physician on board, and he would not trouble the captain to procure one, but with all that patient endurance which had ever characterized him, bore his sufferings unmurmuringly and alone. He kept his stateroom almost entirely, to avoid remark, and by this means incurred still greater

.

THE LAST PLAY-BILL.

ST. CHARLES THEATRE.

BENEFIT OF

MR. BOOTH,

And positively last night of his engagement.

Friday Evening, Nov. 19th, 1852.

MR. BOOTH IN PLAY AND FARCE.

THE IRON CHEST.

Sir Edward Mortimer	Mr. Booth.
Wilford	Mr. Nagle.
Fitzharding	Mr. Kemble.
Adam Winterton	Mr. Mark Smith.
Sampson Rawbold	Mr. De Bar.
Orson	Mr. Lewellen.
Rawbold	Mr. Potter.
Servant	Mr. Melville.
Gregory	Mr. Jones.
Peter	Mr. Howard.
Helen	Mrs. Stone.
Blanch	Mrs. Estelle Potter.
Barbara	Mrs. Howard.

To conclude with the Musical Farce of the

REVIEW;

Or, The Wag of Windsor.

John Lump	Mr. Booth.
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neglect. His disease turned to consumption of the bowels, of which he died on Tuesday, 30th of November, 1852, at 2 P.M. The steward of the vessel reported his last words to have been, in a scarcely audible voice, "Pray ! pray ! pray !" On reaching Cincinnati the Masonic fraternity had the body embalmed in a metallic coffin and deposited in the Baptist vault. Mrs. Booth was telegraphed for, and arrived in Cincinnati expecting to find her husband very ill, — the second despatch, announcing his decease, not reaching Baltimore until her departure from that city. She returned home as soon as possible, bringing the body with her for interment.

For three days the house in which his remains lay was thronged with people of every class. The walls of the parlors were draped with white, pictures and mirrors were covered, and all the ornaments were removed, excepting a marble figure of Shakspeare, which was placed near the coffin, and seemed to gaze down upon the form beneath. The face under the glass plate was very calm and beautiful, and the brown hair more thickly strewn with white than when his family had seen it last ; the gray eyes were partly visible between the half-shut lids, and the lips, retaining their lifelike color, were smilingly closed. Such a placidity and repose pervaded the whole countenance that it was felt how easy the transition must have been from suffering life to this calm sleep. How often had his children found him at rest with this same look upon his face, and had stepped softly not to disturb him ! Now its perfect naturalness occasioned doubt in many minds,

and physicians were sent for to satisfy his family whether this was really death or a trance. Hope was futile and vain ; but while it animated the hearts that suffered, it had become as powerful as life.

The family and attendants proceeded to the cemetery, followed by a long procession on foot, composed of members of the theatrical profession, private citizens, and a large concourse of colored people, many of whom, as well as those connected with the theatres, wore crape on the left arm for thirty days. Mrs. Booth had requested that no music should be played as the funeral moved through the streets, or at the grave, and with respectful observance of her wish Volandt's full band removed to a distant part of the cemetery. As the procession toiled slowly up the hill and entered the grounds, the faint throbs of the Dead March broke mournfully upon the ear ; the coffin was placed on a bier, and set down at the gates of the mausoleum. The music died away in echoes, and the minister, with his long black robes fluttering in the wind, began the solemn service, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Hundreds of men stood bareheaded in the bleak evening air ; the ground was thickly crusted with snow, which now began fluttering down again, and the sun threw its last gleams over all as it was slowly sinking behind the hills.

In the spring, when the snow had entirely gone, the grave was dug, and the coffin, taken from the mausoleum, was buried. It was subsequently removed to a larger lot in Greenmount Cemetery, Baltimore.

On Edwin Booth's return from California he erected

a monument over his father's grave. The sculpture was executed in Boston, and completed in the spring of 1858, and the monument was placed over the tomb on the 1st of May, his father's birthday. To this plot have been removed the remains of Richard Booth, father of Junius Brutus Booth, who died in 1840 aged seventy-six, and the bodies of five children.

The following letter to Mrs. Booth was written by the manager of the New Orleans Theatre : —

NEW ORLEANS, Dec. 6, 1852.

MRS. J. B. BOOTH.

DEAR MADAM, — It was with deep regret and sorrow that we read here a telegraphic paragraph, on the morning of the 2d inst., announcing the decease of your late worthy husband. It was the more startling because the least expected. During his engagement with us in the St. Charles Theatre it was generally remarked how well he looked and how well he performed. For myself, who remember him since his first week's performance in the United States, and have been well acquainted with his professional career, I was agreeably astonished at the vigor evinced by him during the six nights he performed with us, and the conclusion of his engagement seemed a cause of regret to the public generally. As a matter of information to you, I would state that we paid him ten hundred and eighty-four dollars for his engagement of the six nights. He spoke of having been robbed on his route through Mexico, but I do not recollect of what amount. Trusting, madam, that you will find consolation in the reflection that the dispensations of Providence are always for wise and merciful

purposes, and wishing you health and the enjoyments of life for many years, I am

Your obedient serv't and well-wisher,

N. M. LUDLOW.

Booth's genius was held in high estimation by many of our countrymen. A New York journal said : —

“The late Rufus Choate was an enthusiastic lover of Shakspeare's works, and familiar with every line of them. Of all the players, he liked Junius Brutus Booth the best. In remarkable power of intense mental action and concentrated feeling, the eminent actor and the incomparable lawyer resembled each other. Booth was the only player that realized his ideal of a great tragedian ; and when he heard of his decease, he exclaimed sorrowfully, ‘ *There are no more actors.* ’ ”

The following extracts are taken from an analytical sketch published in New York : —

“Booth was possessed of great kindness of heart, and was one of the most humane, unselfish, and generous men that ever lived. He cared little for money, only as a means to gratify his humane and kindly impulses ; and as for fame, perhaps so much was never carried by any man with such careless ease and real indifference. His faults are of a kind incident to such a nature. His humanity was illustrated more by example than by precept. His loving-kindness was not confined by any means to his fellow-creatures, but went out towards the whole animal creation, and in a manner so strange and eccentric at times that it was not unfrequently regarded as the evidence of insanity. A very amiable insanity

it must be admitted, and a very natural outgrowth of a disposition we can but wish was more common in a cruel and selfish world.

.

“We have been told that once, when living on his farm in Harford County, he sent for all his neighbors and friends, far and near, to come to his place and attend a funeral. When they arrived they found, to their great disgust, that it was the carcass of a favorite horse that he wished to have buried with all due solemnity. The crowd retired, some in disgust, others laughing at the strange performance. His family, however, understood the meaning of the thing. A physician was sent for, and the ‘chief mourner’ passed through a long and unusually serious attack of disease. One night when he was to act he did not appear, nor could he be found at his lodgings. He did not come home that night. Next morning he was found in the woods, several miles from the city, wandering in the snow. He was taken care of. His derangement proved to be temporary, and his reason returned in a few days.

“We have the best authority for believing that this tendency in Booth to disappoint audiences before whom he was to appear, and for which he was so much censured (most people being inclined to attribute it to habits of dissipation), arose far more frequently from causes over which he had no control. When at home he would sometimes disappear in a very strange and unaccountable manner, remaining away for hours at a time, and return silent, thoughtful, and completely abstracted, either unable or not inclined to give any

account of himself. His family were not disposed to question him closely at such times, but were fully convinced that these strange freaks were not in the remotest degree connected with inebriety. Anything occurring suddenly, which was calculated to rouse strongly his sympathies, would cause him to forget entirely his engagements; and many times large audiences, impatiently waiting his appearance on the stage, were doomed to disappointment, and left muttering their imprecations, while he himself was quite unconscious of any impropriety till reminded of his neglect.

“We cannot close this very imperfect analysis of the moral and intellectual character of one in whom the elements were so strangely mixed as to lead the world to doubt whether they were of good or evil, without a glance at his religious convictions.

“These, as was to have been expected, partook largely of his native mental and moral characteristics. They were broad, liberal, comprehensive, and founded upon love. With him, indeed, love was the fulfilment of the law, and without it all loudly proclaimed professions were but ‘sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.’

“He was emphatically a devout man. His last words uttered in the ear of the steward of the steamboat, his sole attendant in his dying hour, were ‘Pray! pray! pray!’ and thus passed from earth this troubled, but loving, sincere, and humane spirit.

“If to possess the most lively humanity, and a child-like, confiding faith in everything that is good, noble,

and pure, in whatever shape it presents itself, is acceptable on high ; if to cherish for all animate nature the most tender love, is to fulfil the law and cause much to be forgiven ; if he who considereth the poor is blessed, then may we not hope that this man, after his weary toil in the journey of life, bearing his heavy burden of disease, at last found rest in the kingdom of that God he tried to worship 'in spirit and in truth,' and that Redeemer in whose footsteps he, at least, strove to walk according to the light that was in him, and the power that was given him."

So ceased to beat on earth that gentle and unselfish heart. Whatever errors had controlled his judgment, or obscured that penetrative sense which renders men so worldly wise, it was honorable to him that through all the changes of a varied life he retained an almost child-like faith in the honesty of human nature. Too credulous, perhaps, of the universality of this quality, he was easily swayed by that unquestioning philanthropy which formed the basis of his character.

In disposition he was mild and unobtrusive, yet his kindness was qualified with undeviating firmness. His idea of *home* was a sacred circle wherein few were admitted save the immediate family. In the youth of his children everything connected with his profession was carefully avoided, as if he feared, by intercourse or allusion, to throw that glamour over its reality which might delude the senses and engender romantic desires for excitement.

For his two younger sons he had a workshop erected in the garden, and stored with lumber and the necessary

tools ; thus blending pleasure with instruction, he strove to excite in their minds a love of mechanical pursuits, quoting "*Laborare est orare.*" Before leaving for California, he placed them under the careful guardianship of excellent teachers.

Prior to any anticipation of this voyage, he was erecting a handsome cottage on the Farm, where he purposed to pass the summer months of every year. The building was designed in the Elizabethan style, arranged to suit his own peculiar fancy. The site selected is near the old cabin which had then for many years been occupied by the servants.

Occasionally his children were permitted to visit the theatre, but were never allowed a free indulgence of promiscuous plays. On one occasion he took every member of the family to witness Mr. Macready's "Werner." The writer can remember only a sombre man with peculiar brows and guttural voice, dragging through what seemed to her a very dismal tragedy ; but Mr. Booth pronounced it "a most exquisite performance."

He was always a deep student, and would set himself tasks, committing them to memory like a school-boy. Late in life he acquired the part of *Penrudduck*, and performed it perfectly ; but, failing to retain it for a future rendition, he acknowledged, almost sadly, that "time was gaining on him."

A striking peculiarity in his character was the contrast between his assumption of democracy by which he sought the level of the humblest, and encouraged even the low and vile to approach him as friends, and

that innate dignity which would exalt him as a peer above the herd, and check all attempt at undue familiarity. There was an awe about him that neither his deep learning, age, nor position elicited, but which the natural demeanor of the man inspired.

One of the most beautiful qualities of his nature was *humility*, — that lowliness of soul which emanates from a disregard of self, and, while elevating its possessor, causes him to appreciate in others all that is truly great and good, unaffected by the meaner passions. Perhaps it was the daily exercise of this self-abnegation that rendered him so childlike yet so noble in the eyes of all who loved him, while, in the pursuance of his profession, it left him free from the petty malice and jealousies of an actor's life, and enabled him justly to award praise to the meritorious, and discern true worth in any garb.

All forms of religion and all temples of devotion were sacred to him, and he never failed to bare his head reverently when passing a church. He worshipped at many shrines ; he admired the Koran, and in his copy of that volume many beautiful passages are underscored. Days sacred to color, ore, and metals were religiously observed by him. In the synagogues he was known as a Jew, because he conversed with rabbis and learned doctors, and joined their worship in the Hebraic tongue. He read the Talmud, also, and strictly adhered to many of its laws.

Several fathers of the Roman Catholic Church recount pleasant hours spent with him in theological discourse, and aver that he was of their religion because of his

knowledge of the mysteries of their faith. Of the numerous houses of worship to which he went, the one he most loved to frequent was a floating church, or "Sailor's Bethel." The congregation was of the humblest kind, and the ministry not at all edifying. The writer remembers kneeling through a lengthy impromptu prayer, which contained no spirit of piety to her childish ears; but looking around wearily at her father, she beheld his face so earnestly inspired with devotion, that she felt rebuked, and it became pleasant to attend to that which was so devoid of interest before.

His reverence for religion was universal and deep-rooted. It was daily shown in acts of philanthropy and humane deeds, which were, however, too often misdirected. He was not a sectarian, but made many creeds his study; and although the dogmas of the Church might have yielded him a more enduring peace, yet the tenderness of his heart, from which emanated his loving-kindness and great charity, afforded strength to his declining years.

"Why then doth flesh, a bubble-glass of breath,
Hunt after honor and advancement vain,
And rear a trophy for devouring death,
With so great labor and long-lasting pain,
As if his days forever should remain?
Sith all that in this world is great or gay,
Doth as a vapor vanish and decay."



Truly Yours
Jesse Coolidge

PART II.



THE YOUNGER BOOTH.

1833.



*"At my birth
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes."*

I HENRY IV., Act III. Sc. I.

THE YOUNGER BOOTH.

EDWIN THOMAS BOOTH was born at the Booth Farm in Harford County, Maryland, on the 13th of November, 1833, a night remarkable for a brilliant meteoric shower. It is at least pleasing to think that from an errant planet came to earth so bright a star. In negro phraseology, Edwin Booth was said to have been "born lucky" and "gifted to see ghosts," because of the meteoric phenomena and of his having been born with a caul. He was named after two of his father's friends, Edwin Forrest and Thomas Flynn, although the former actor was always somewhat piqued that Edwin did not retain the *Forrest*, which he insisted had been bestowed upon him.

Edwin Booth's earliest recollection of his father was in connection with sombre woods and darkness; they had travelled a whole day together, reaching the Farm late at night; a man who had accompanied them, to take back the saddle-horses hired at a distant country-place, was heard going away in the dark, as Mr. Booth, raising his little son in his arms, lifted him over the crooked snake-fence around his own woodland, and, placing him securely in the grass, said, "Your foot is on your native heath."

In a very interesting book, called "Shadows on the Wall," by that talented and well-beloved citizen of Baltimore, John H. Hewitt, the following passage occurs : —

"Not less distinguished, but in a different way, stands out the name of Edwin Booth before his countrymen and the world. He was a comely lad, as I remember him, dressed in a Spanish cloak (among the first to display that style), giving promise of the man he has turned out to be. Inheriting his father's genius for the mimic stage, he has achieved the first rank upon it, and it has been his good fortune to have lived in an era of larger prices and more numerous audiences. He is so far different from his father, in style and execution, that his greatest successes have been achieved in different rôles ; and while he stands unsurpassed in 'Hamlet,' he will not find fault with an old friend of Junius Brutus Booth for standing by *him* as the greatest *Richard*, *Sir Giles*, and *Iago*, that ever trod the American boards. He is still young enough to have a long career of success and usefulness before him. His fame is already the property of his country and cannot be taken from him."

Edwin Booth's education was commenced under the care of Miss Susan Hyde, a young lady whose capabilities were unanimously acknowledged in the neighborhood of "Old Town." Hers was one of those old-fashioned schools for girls and boys now almost unknown, where the rudiments of a sound education were well inculcated, and where the gentle mistress presided as the Minerva of her little circle. Miss Hyde

is at present the Secretary of the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, and a fervent admirer of the genius of her distinguished pupil, who holds her in affectionate remembrance. Subsequently, Mr. Booth placed his son with an old Frenchman, a West-Indian naval officer, Louis Dugas, who had gathered around him a few young persons in their teens. He afterward went to a university, and studied at intervals of time with a Mr. Kearney, who wrote all his own school-books and encouraged dramatic representations among his boys. On one occasion Edwin and John S. Clarke, dressed in the white linen trousers and black jackets then in fashion, enacted or recited, with appropriate gestures, the quarrel scene of *Brutus* and *Cassius*. The elder Booth entered the crowded school-room unobserved, and, placing himself on the corner of a bench near the door, witnessed and enjoyed the performance.

Edwin began to travel with his father on one of those periodical tours which it was customary for him to make, and relates, as among the earliest of his theatrical reminiscences, the first appearance in Boston of the now famous William Warren. Mr. Booth, after his performance of *Shylock* at the Howard Athenæum, seated himself with Edwin among the audience to witness Mr. Warren's acting of *Jacques Stroph* in the play of "Robert Macaire." It was an exceptional thing for him to make one of the auditory, but the débutant was a favorite of his; he always manifested great interest in his career, and seemed to be thoroughly pleased with his performance on that evening. Between these protracted theatrical tours Edwin usually resumed his school duties in Baltimore.

He played the violin well, which he had learned under Signor Picioli, and he amused his father by thrumming the banjo, which was becoming a fashionable instrument and had been taught him by a clever negro musician. He accompanied the banjo by singing the native melodies in the broad accent of the Southern negro.

He was envied by his companions because of these trips with his father ; but their novelty soon lost all charm for him, and the monotony of school life would have been preferable to the arduous task of watching the health and caring for the safety of his eccentric, though kind-hearted sire. It was a duty requiring the patience and endurance of a woman ; but Mrs. Booth, no longer young or strong, was compelled to place the charge into her son's hands ; while he, an excitable, nervously organized youth, was often unequal to bear half that was required of him. Sleepless nights and lonely days are not the proper lot of boyhood, yet many such painful experiences were woven into the early life of Edwin Booth. While considering the love he bore his father, and recalling his slight figure, with his imaginative mind sensitively alive to the horrible, particularly impressed perhaps by the great responsibility devolving upon him, we can enter fully into the painfulness of the anecdotes that follow. Stopping once at the Pemberton House in Boston, one of those old hotels built with a square courtyard in the centre after the manner of some ancient Continental inns, a curious incident occurred. Around one part of the ground floor were stables ; adjoining these, and opening into Mr. Booth's room, was a dark, unventilated

cupboard, unfitted for use, because of the powerful stable odor, which the actor, however, firmly contended was conducive to health.

One night, returning to his rooms physically exhausted by a heavy performance, he could not rest, and insisted on going into the streets to roam about. Edwin remonstrated with him in vain, — offered to play and sing for him, tried to interest him in other topics than those of the stage ; but, finding every effort defeated, he stood up boldly and said, “You shall *not* go out.” Trembling at his own temerity, for he knew his feebleness in comparison with his powerful, thick-set father, he was astonished at the result. Mr. Booth gave him one long stare, then vanished into the dark closet, securing the door on the inner side. He remained in darkness and silence for a long time, no entreaty, coaxing, or threat being able to elicit a sound from him, until Edwin, who had endured the greatest distress of mind, fearing that he could not longer exist in that airless, stifling chamber, if indeed he were not already dead, was about to run for help ; when his father opened the door, and walking sternly across the room undressed himself, and without speaking went to bed.

In Louisville, on another occasion, after the night’s performance of “Richard III.,” which he had acted splendidly, Mr. Booth started for home ; but, moved by a sudden impulse, he changed his mind, preferring to walk the streets alone. In vain Edwin persuaded him to go to the hotel and rest. Mr. Booth, finding that his son would not leave him, darted off in a contrary direction, and walked rapidly until he came to a long

covered market, which he entered, and began pacing up and down. From one end of the place to the other their walk was kept up without pause until daylight. Edwin soon became exhausted with fatigue, but his father, seemingly untired, would at times slacken his pace abruptly, then start off with increased rapidity, Edwin falling in with his gait as it changed, sometimes angry, and again ready to laugh at the ludicrousness of the situation. Not a syllable had been spoken by either, when the elder pedestrian was at last silently impelled to go home to his bed.

Other occurrences, partaking more of the painful than the ludicrous, could not fail to cloud the youth of one who felt his responsibility as great as his affection.

William Winter says : —

“Between them there existed from the first a profound and fervent, though silent and undemonstrative sympathy. As Edwin grew up, his close companionship seemed more and more to be needed and desired by the parent. . . . As a boy, he is represented to have been grave beyond his years, observant, thoughtful, and rather melancholy, but wise in knowledge of his surroundings, and strong in reticence and self-poise. He was accustomed to accompany his father as attendant and dresser, but in fact he was the chosen monitor and guardian of that wild genius, and possessed more influence over him than was exercised by any other person. This association, operating upon hereditary talent, wrought its inevitable consequence in making Edwin Booth an actor. The strange life that he saw and led — a life in which fictitious emotions, imaginative influ-

ences, and every-day trivialities are so singularly blended — exerted its customary charm upon a youthful, sensitive, and irrepressible nature, at once luring him towards the stage, and preparing him for its profession.”

On the 10th of September, 1849, Edwin Booth made his first appearance on any stage, in the character of *Tressel*, at the Boston Museum, under the following circumstances. Mr. Thoman, who was prompter and actor, was arranging some detail of the play, and becoming irritable at having so much to do, said abruptly to Edwin, who was standing near him, “This is too much work for one man ; *you* ought to play *Tressel*,” and he induced him to undertake the part. On the eventful night the elder Booth dressed for *Richard III.* was seated with his feet upon a table in his dressing-room. Calling his son before him, like a severe pedagogue or inquisitor, he interrogated him in that hard, laconic style he could so seriously assume : —

“Who was *Tressel* ? ”

“A messenger from the field of Tewksbury.”

“What was his mission ? ”

“To bear the news of the defeat of the king’s party.”

“How did he make the journey ? ”

“On horseback.”

“Where are your spurs ? ”

Edwin glanced quickly down, and said he had not thought of them.

“Here, take mine.”

Edwin unbuckled his father’s spurs, and fastened them on his own boots. His part being ended on the stage, he found his father still sitting in the dressing-room, apparently engrossed in thought.

"Have you done well?" he asked.

"I think so," replied Edwin.

"Give me my spurs," rejoined his father; and obediently young *Tressel* replaced the spurs upon *Gloucester's* feet.

In the summer of 1850 Edwin and J. S. Clarke gave a dramatic reading at the Court-House in Belair at the solicitation of a number of collegians and residents of that village. As the request for the entertainment was unanimous, it was cordially responded to, and the two youths mounted their horses and rode twenty-five miles over the roughest of country roads under an August sun to obtain printed programmes and tickets in Baltimore. Mr. Booth was as elated as themselves with the undertaking, and, happy in expectation, the two friends rode back the next day, and immediately commenced arranging a large room in the county court-house, which had been offered for their convenience. The doors and windows were instantly besieged by an eager throng of rustics, who were anxious to witness the preparations for the great show, evidently expecting that a circus or some wonderful magician was to exhibit, as nothing more elevated than such performances had ever been given in Belair so publicly and on so grand a scale.

An old negro was sent out to post the bills, and as the young men rode in from the Farm on that eventful evening they discovered, to their intense chagrin, that every bill had been placed upside down. The house was full and fashionable, — the audience observing the decorous regulation of their meeting-houses by sepa-

rating at the door and seating themselves in perfect silence, the gentlemen on one side of the room, the ladies on the other. Order was strictly observed, and the performance was allowed to proceed to its conclusion without the slightest interruption of applause or dissent.

The programme will be found on the following page.

During the evening they sang a number of negro melodies with blackened faces, using appropriate dialect, and accompanying their vocal attempts with the somewhat inharmonious banjo and bones.

In 1851 his father's being announced for *Richard III.* at the National Theatre, New York, led indirectly to Edwin's attempting that character. Mr. Booth had a partiality for the old theatres in which his first successes had been achieved, and his preference was extended also to the old, dingy, incommodious hotels, wherein he submitted to every inconvenience rather than patronize new establishments. On one particular night, as he and his son were preparing to go to the theatre, he suddenly changed his mood and refused to start, saying that he was ill and unable to perform. Edwin suggested that he should rouse himself for the effort, at least present himself at the theatre, thinking that when within the building he would forego this strange resolve. He reminded his father how well he had rehearsed and how well in health he had been all day; but no argument could move him. "What will they do without you, father?" the son exclaimed in despair. "Who can they substitute at the last moment?" "Go act it yourself," was the curt response. After some further altercation the father insisted that

GRAND DRAMATIC FESTIVAL

AT THE COURT-HOUSE IN BELAIR,

Saturday, August 2.

In compliance with the request of several gentlemen,

MR. EDWIN BOOTH

respectfully informs the inhabitants of Belair and vicinity, that
he will give one entertainment as above, in
conjunction with

MR. J. S. CLARKE.

The performance will consist of

SHAKSPERIAN READINGS, ETC.

PART FIRST.

Selections from RICHARD III.

Richard III. Mr. E. Booth.

Selections from MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Shylock Mr. J. S. Clarke.

The celebrated Dagger Scene from MACBETH.

Macbeth Mr. E. Booth.

Selections from Kotzebue's STRANGER.

The Stranger Mr. J. S. Clarke.

Hamlet's Soliloquy on Death Mr. E. Booth.

Selections from Otway's tragedy of VENICE PRESERVED.

Jaffier Mr. J. S. Clarke.

Selections from RICHELIEU.

Cardinal Richelieu Mr. E. Booth.

The great Quarrel Scene from JULIUS CÆSAR.

Brutus Mr. E. Booth.

Cassius Mr. J. S. Clarke.

his son should assume the character of *Richard III.* on that night. The carriage had been waiting for a long while at the door, with the trunk of stage-dresses strapped upon it. There was no time to be lost, and Edwin sprang into the vehicle and drove furiously to the theatre, where, on arrival, he encountered John R. Scott. In great dismay he related his father's sudden freak. "No matter," replied Scott calmly, "*you* act it." In surprise Edwin exclaimed, "That is what my father said, and what he sent me here to do ; but it is impossible, — I cannot." Entering behind the scenes, he was quickly surrounded by others, who urged him to "try," promising to help him in every way, to make an apology to the audience, etc. It resulted in these excited people dressing him in his father's clothes, which, for his slender figure, were "a world too wide," while some one with book in hand heard him repeat the soliloquy. All was bustle and confusion behind the curtain ; the theatre in front was densely crowded, and the young unwilling substitute was hurried to the stage entrance. At his appearance the applause rang out in a wild burst, but as suddenly ceased. No apology had been made, and in astonished silence the spectators allowed the play to begin and to proceed. He, who had absorbed into his own being every word, look, and tone of his father, soon wrung from the audience a gratified applause. John R. Scott showed great concern and uneasiness throughout the play, fearing the breaking down of his young *Richard* ; but in answer to the prolonged call at the close, he led him proudly before the curtain and introduced him as "the

worthy scion of a noble stock," adding, *sotto voce*, "I'll wager they don't know what that means."

On Edwin's return to his hotel he was questioned coldly by his father as to his success. The elder Booth was found by the son apparently exactly as he had left him, unchanged in mood or position ; but it is believed now by Edwin that he had witnessed the whole of the performance of *Richard*, as well as that of *Tressel* on a previous occasion, and was not dissatisfied with the result.

Edwin Booth soon after entered into an engagement with Theodore Barton of Baltimore to play any part assigned him for a salary of six dollars a week. Although he had acted in tragedies with success, considering his youth and want of training, yet in minor characters and in inferior plays he proved awkward, confused, and apparently a failure. He once attempted a part in pantomime with Madame Ciocca ; had graceful pose to assume and airy trivial manners to simulate ; but he did everything wrong, filled the French actress with horror at his *gaucherie*, and called down upon himself her abuse in broken English. In the year 1852 the elder Booth went to New York, intending to start for California, accompanied by his son Junius, but in consequence of illness he returned to his home in Baltimore. He sailed in the next steamer from New York, taking Edwin with him, whom he had previously arranged to leave at home. In one week from the date of starting they arrived at Aspinwall ; then proceeded up the Chagres River to Gorgona on a flat-boat which conveyed the passengers and their luggage.

They slept one night at Gorgona, and proceeded to cross the Isthmus on mules. At night they slept in a hut, on wine-casks and trunks, covered by their blankets ; the only lady of the party occupied a hammock, and each man lay with a hand under his pillow, holding a pistol. Edwin, sleepless, watched the natives sharpening their *macheetos*, — or long knives which they used to cut the tall grass in front of them as they journeyed on foot, — and vainly tried to understand their conversation, which was carried on in low whispers. The rats ran about undisturbed during the night, and the whole party rose in the morning, unrefreshed by their rest, and proceeded on mules. The elder Booth prophesied that there would be a railroad across the Isthmus before many years, and confidently anticipated the time when a canal would connect the two oceans.

After an engagement of two weeks in San Francisco, Mr. Booth proceeded to Sacramento, in which city, on the occasion of his benefit, he acted *Richard III.* The following night J. B. Booth, Junior, for *his* benefit, played *Othello*, and his father, *Iago* ; and the following night being Edwin's benefit, he acted *Jaffier* to his father's *Pierre*. Arrayed in black for his part of *Jaffier*, Edwin perceived his father seated on the steps of his dressing-room, who at his approach observed, "You look like *Hamlet* ; why did you not act *Hamlet* for your benefit?" Edwin carelessly replied, "If I ever have another, I *will*."

Disappointed at finding no theatre in San Francisco suitable for the production of his plays, — the new theatre progressing only in the imagination of the people,

and the state of the country being discouraging in every respect, — Mr. Booth determined to start for New York ; and, being assured that Edwin had resolved to become an actor, he would not consent to allow him to accompany him home, but advised him to remain in California and perfect himself in his profession. Although proverbially lavish of money in cases of need or charity, and never pressing for ready or even just payment of a loan, it seemed harsh that he should have demanded of his son Junius, who had not profited greatly by the transaction, the full amount for his services, according to their agreement ; but he had great regard for the law of equity, even with his own family, his severity therein being a principle, as with *Hotspur* : —

“ I ’ll give thrice so much land
To any well-deserving friend ;
But in the way of bargain, mark ye me,
I ’ll cavil on the ninth part of a hair.”

The prosperous state of theatrical business in California was most encouraging when the offer had been made and accepted between son and father ; but, by one of those sudden reverses in financial matters that occur in newly settled countries, an unaccountable depression had changed the whole aspect of affairs almost upon arrival of the veteran tragedian. The hard times so long threatening now burst in terrible earnest. Men who had been wealthy a few weeks previous, ready to squander, to lend, or to give, now became hard, suspicious, and grasping. Edwin, in this dilemma, accepted a proposition of Mr. D. W. Waller to accompany him

to Nevada. At that place he acted *Iago* for the first time, and played alternately in Nevada and Grass Valley.

J. B. Booth, Jr., had said to Edwin, at parting, "Put a slug [which was a large octagonal gold piece of fifty dollars] in the bottom of your trunk, forget you have it, and when things are at the worst, bring out the slug." The advice was followed; but the worst soon came, for theatrical affairs were in a most disastrous condition at Nevada. Ruin and starvation were the evils that oppressed all minds, and now the snow fell unceasingly until the travellers were completely cut off from the rest of the world. The theatre had been closed for a fortnight in consequence of the distressed state of these towns.

One night, as Edwin was passing along a dark road where the houses had literally been undermined by the gold-diggers, and great gulches yawned amidst the slush of snow and mud, rendering pedestrianism unsafe, he came face to face with a man carrying a lantern. By its glimmer he recognized the actor, George Spear, familiarly called "Old Spudge" (now an inmate of the Forrest Home, Philadelphia), who cried out, "Hollo! Ted, is that you? There is a mail in," he continued, "and a letter for *you*." The snow had prevented the arrival of the post for a long while past, but a courier had at last broken through the almost impenetrable mass, and on horseback arrived with the long-delayed mail-bag.

"What news is there?" asked Edwin carelessly. "Not good news for you, my boy." At this reply the

lad seemed to detect the fatal truth, either by the accent or hesitation of the old actor, for in terror he exclaimed, "Spear, is my father dead?" Gently as possible the sad story was told him, and the old man, who had come out to break the intelligence, now led the half-distracted son to the hotel, where the waiting group of friends endeavored to calm his sorrow. He was stunned by the blow, and they could not understand how deep his grief was, or how he blamed himself for having allowed his father to undertake the homeward journey alone.

Poverty and utter "hard times" settled upon the actors in desperate reality. They were helpless, and dreaded the day when they should be unable even to obtain credit; the cold had become intense, and the snow continued to fall without intermission.

Every man — ruffian, gambler, laborer, and scholar — was on terms of equality at that time in Nevada; for as Mr. B. L. Farjeon remarks, in his interesting story of "The Shadows on the Snow Ranges," "so small a matter as one being born a gentleman and another a common laborer was here of no account."

A hopeless group stood at a street corner one day, bewailing their condition, when it was casually suggested that they should walk to Marysville. The worst that could befall in the adventure would be no worse than the misery awaiting them here. Two or three men accepted the proposition of one who immediately constituted himself "leader." An actor named Barry, and Burridge, a musician, whose violin had comprised the entire orchestra at the theatre, decided to join the party.

Edwin, sauntering leisurely up to this group, was told of their intention, and consented to go with them without reflecting upon the fatigue and exposure of the undertaking. Although of an age when meagre fare and privation might seriously have undermined a constitution never robust, he ventured to tramp a distance of fifty miles across the mountains, the foremost man breaking the road through the drifts. Two days of walking through heavy snow brought them at night to Marysville, where the pedestrians disbanded.

Edwin borrowed ten dollars of an acquaintance, with which he secured passage to Sacramento. On arrival, he found that the city had been destroyed partially by fire, and that later floods had set in and swept away nearly everything that had escaped the flames.

Letters from home awaited him at San Francisco, where he had gone at once, acquainting him with the details of his father's death, in which his mother advised him and his brother to remain in California if they considered it best for their theatrical future, adding that their coming home would not be of any avail; their father was buried, and the family intended to live at the Farm.

J. B. Booth, the younger, at that time was co-manager with the Messrs. Chapman, and was able to give Edwin an engagement, but could make no agreement allowing him a fixed salary, business being still in a precarious state. With this poor prospect of earning a living, and his present penniless condition weighing on his spirits, he met an acquaintance who opportunely remembered that Edwin had once lent

him twenty dollars, and who was now eager to cancel the debt. This state of affairs ought to have sharpened any man's memory, but Edwin failed to recall the loan until circumstances related by his debtor brought it to his mind ; for it had been made in those days of plenty, not long departed, when no one asked a favor or a loan in vain. Elated by the possession of so much gold, he thought how pleasant it was to be able to send part of it to those who had befriended him, and in whose debt he was, and how sumptuously too he would fare for a time on the remainder. Walking away with an elasticity in his gait, new to him at that time of depression, he met a companion with whom he turned into a gambling saloon, one of those crowded and conveniently located places so numerous in those days. Carelessly watching men throw down their gold, and in one sweep of the hand amassing hundreds, he who had never attempted a game before, and was ignorant of the mysteries of *vingt-et-un*, staked his twenty-dollar gold piece only to see it deftly swept away with others to fill the pockets of some luckier man. In despair he left the place and has never since been tempted to gamble.

Several months later the scene-painter, Fairchild, who was to have a benefit, obtained from him a promise to act *Richard III.* J. B. Booth tried to dissuade him from the undertaking, advising him to become better acquainted with the public, and to play more romantic parts suited to his age and appearance, rather than undertake so arduous a rôle. Edwin, however, resolved to make the attempt. A crowded house and an enthusiastic audience received him ; he acted

finely, and was told afterward that throughout the performance a tall dark man stood behind the scenes watching him intently. This proved to be Ferdinand Ewer, then editor of the *Pioneer*, a monthly magazine, (but at present a minister of the gospel in New York,) who on that occasion penned the first criticism that had ever been written of Edwin Booth's acting. The great success of this performance induced the managers to deviate from their original intention, that of devoting their theatre to comedy; and they proposed to Booth the production of other tragedies, particularly of "Hamlet." He steadily resisted every inducement to perform that character, but personated many others with great success, among which were *Sir Edward Mortimer*, *Shylock*, *Richard III.*, and *Othello*. Finally a benefit was tendered him, on which occasion he played *Hamlet*. The words once spoken carelessly to his father had assumed the sacredness of a promise:—

"Thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmixed with baser matter."

One can imagine with what intensity of feeling, as he thought of his father, he spoke the lines, which had acquired for him a powerful significance, —

"He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again."

A conservative spirit seems to have taken possession of the adventurous people of California, for they cultivated a feeling of exclusiveness, which led them almost to ignore the existence of what had become to them

the old world, designated colloquially "the States." They would push onward to Australia and distant parts, but rarely turned homeward even to better their condition; hence it is not so remarkable that no enterprising manager had, at the height of Edwin Booth's popularity, with the name of the father still warm in the hearts of playgoers in "the States," induced him to return and establish himself at once in the position he afterward attained. Instead of this, his name was put in the bills when the "business" was on the decline, and it very rarely proved ineffectual to draw large audiences; but meanwhile he was drifting into a kind of stock-star, on a pittance of salary.

Mrs. Catherine Forrest Sinclair came from the East and opened the new theatre on its completion, Edwin playing secondary parts to her. Mr. James Murdock and Laura Keane followed, the latter attributing her failure to "Edwin Booth's bad acting." There sprang up between this lady and himself a mutual dislike which culminated in something like hatred; but the duties of theatrical life exacted that they should appear upon the stage together.

Mr. D. C. Anderson, a kind, genial gentleman and actor, congratulated himself and Edwin, whom he learned to love as a son, upon their good resolutions to be temperate, virtuous, and domestic. They bought a plot of ground, seventy-five by two hundred feet in extent, which they satirically called the "Ranch," and in a small house of two rooms they lived, doing all their own work, domestic and menial. This veteran actor remarked recently, in speaking to the writer of Edwin

Booth, that "he believed him to be the noblest specimen of man God ever created." Years and changes had not diminished his admiration for the boy whom he had so lovingly taken under his protection.

In the year 1854 James Stark, a famous tragedian of California, had returned from Australia with glowing accounts of its prosperity and wealth. Mr. Anderson urged Booth to make a professional visit to that country, and eventually arrangements were made to that effect. The idea prevailed that there were no actresses in Australia, and as Mr. Anderson had been informed that Miss Laura Keene was desirous of going there, without letting her intention be known to certain persons in San Francisco, he entered into an engagement with her to act with Booth. Miss Keene, asserting that tragedy was her forte, that she acted comedy merely through necessity, and would adopt tragedy gladly if offered the opportunity, readily consented. It was settled between Mr. Anderson and the lady that she was to go on board the ship at night, and they were to sail at four o'clock in the morning. The captain missed the tide and was obliged to delay until the afternoon. In the mean time, as afterward transpired, the captain's wife, who had been a governess, an actress, and later a lodging-house keeper, was commanded by her husband to get a fresh wardrobe, let her house, and sail with him to Australia, whereupon Mr. Booth would be compelled to engage her in default of other female support. A Mr. Evans, moved by the same speculative idea, brought his wife aboard; the three ladies concealed themselves in their respective cabins,

and the scene, when they met and realized the absurdity of the position, was as amusing as any in which the *dramatis personæ* had ever acted on a mimic stage.

On arriving at Sydney, the destination of the vessel, Booth entered into an engagement with Manager Torning and played *Shylock* to Miss Keene's *Portia*. His performance of *Richard III.* was enthusiastically received. They went thence to Melbourne, where but few performances were given; the dull state of every kind of business materially affecting the theatres. Booth had made the acquaintance of Mr. Hamilton and his wife (who was a daughter of Thomas Hamblin, at one time a manager of the Bowery Theatre, New York, and a very celebrated actor), and an old Irish comedian named "Clem" White. These people were unable to obtain engagements and undecided as to their future course; however, at the last moment, they determined to return to San Francisco, Edwin accompanying them.

Acting companies, leaving the last-mentioned city *en route* for Australia, not unfrequently stopped at the Sandwich Islands. The vessel on this occasion for some reason put in at Honolulu, and Booth and Mr. Anderson decided to give an entertainment there rather than go back to San Francisco without money. An agreement was effected between the five professionals, and the Royal Hawaiian Theatre was secured, for which Booth paid all the money he possessed, fifty dollars, in advance, for one month's rent. They were joined by two actors, scarcely less needy than themselves, who had been left at the Island by a strolling company some months before. The theatre was constructed by sev-

eral houses being thrown into one building, and the company, comprising seven persons, slept in the theatre, which saved the rent for lodgings. One of the actors, Mr. Roe, was a short, thick-set Dutchman, of unprepossessing countenance, who had been accustomed to play female rôles, and who undertook the same line to support Booth, "doubling" the characters of the *Duke of Norfolk* and *Duchess of York*. The King of the Sandwich Islands had lately died, and, the court being in mourning, his successor was unable to attend the theatre publicly; but, expressing a desire to witness Booth's performance of *Richard III.*, his Majesty was accommodated behind the scenes. The arm-chair used for the stage-throne was placed at the wing, with Edwin's theatrical robe thrown over it, and the king seated himself upon it; his escort, who were a Frenchman and a huge Kanaka, the latter wearing a military jacket, white trousers, and a long sword, stood by his side. Edwin was compelled to trouble the king for the throne in the coronation scene, and his Majesty good-naturedly stood until it was returned for his use. Kamehameha IV. was an educated gentleman, speaking English fluently; he told Edwin that when he was a little boy he had seen the elder Booth perform *Richard III.* at the Chatham Theatre in New York.

A letter from Mrs. Sinclair greeted Booth on his arrival at San Francisco, offering him an engagement to play with her at her own theatre, the Metropolitan; he accepted, and his personation of *Benedict* to Mrs. Sinclair's *Rosalind* was enthusiastically received by a large audience. The "business," at first most gratify-

ing, began to decline, in consequence of which he accepted an offer to act at the American Theatre in the same city, where he performed nightly to crowded houses. Seceding from this theatre, he went with a company to Sacramento, enrolling himself as "juvenile man"; but, the business proving a disappointment to the manager, he engaged one of his company to enact his own parts and assume the juvenile characters as well, so that Booth was discharged in order to curtail the expenses. Mr. Sedley and Mrs. Sinclair were about securing a theatre in Sacramento for the production of some very attractive pieces, and now made him an offer to become a joint-lessee with themselves and a Mr. Venua. Accordingly, a shabby little theatre in a back street was leased, where the play of "The Marble Heart" was produced for the first time in America. Mrs. Sinclair distinguished herself by her performance of *Marco*; but the character of *Volage* was claimed by Sedley and Booth, and finally decided by the toss of a penny, falling to Mr. Sedley. "Fortunately for all concerned," Booth remarked, "for he acted the part finely; much better than I could have done it." Edwin took the character of *Raphael*, in which he made a marked success; and, according to theatrical technicality, he *created* the part. The long-continued success of "The Marble Heart" was the means of closing the Forrest Theatre from which he had been discharged. Notwithstanding the increasing popularity of the piece, the management gave up the lease of the house and travelled through other towns to produce it. The combination did not meet with the anticipated success,

however, and after visiting several towns it ultimately disbanded at San Francisco.

Booth now joined a company of eight or ten persons to go through the mining towns ; he travelled on his own horse, while the manager and his wife, the company, scenery, and wardrobe, were transported in a large covered wagon. Some of the "towns" through which they passed were composed of a few huts, the theatre being usually a hall over a shop ; other places contained respectable houses, and occasionally a small convenient theatre was to be obtained. The standard bill with this company was the "Iron Chest" and "Katherine and Petruchio." Booth's dress-basket was covered with canvas, painted to represent an "iron chest," and served for that important "property." The promiscuous population of the mines and huts who could enjoy Shaksperian productions and the plays of the best authors was not to be treated slightly. No curtailment or glossing over of speeches would be permitted by the people, who walked miles to have their evening's amusement conscientiously given.

After acting in several of the mining towns, and at one place being compelled to leave his horse in payment of a debt, Booth arrived penniless in Sacramento. He there formed the acquaintance of Mr. Butler, an architect, who manifested great interest in his career, and urged him not to waste any more time in California, but to return to the States. He told him that Boothroyd Fairclough was attempting to take the position that should be his ; that now, while his father's memory was dear to the American heart, he alone should assume

the vacant place. He had but one reply, — the want of money ; although in his own mind he did not aspire to equal his father or consider himself worthy or capable of doing so.

That his impecuniosity should not deter Edwin Booth from asserting his inherited right to fame, this enthusiastic friend arranged a benefit for him. It proved a great success. He made a farewell speech before a sympathetic audience, and was presented with a pin of California gold representing a wrist and hand, the finger and thumb of which held a valuable diamond. The next day his debts were cancelled, and every bill paid ; but he found by these proceedings that his money was entirely expended. Mr. Butler suggested another benefit, which Edwin opposed. Mr. Butler insisted, however, claiming that the enthusiasm of the previous occasion would warrant it, and he cleverly arranged that actors should come from San Francisco to lend their services. The second farewell was given to an overflowing house, and Booth was to leave for San Francisco the following day. Crowds assembled to see him go on board, the band from the theatre was present to testify good-will, the captain made the young actor stand in a prominent position to be visible to those who wished him again and again “ God speed.” Confusion, noisy farewells, and music filled the air ; nothing was wanting to complete the sense of satisfaction excepting Mr. Butler with the night’s receipts. It was a harassing ordeal for the recipient of this generous ovation, but good wishes will not fill an empty pocket ; and, as Rousseau says, “ A crust of bread and

a bit of money are worth more than God bless you." Fortunately, at the very point of the given time when the gang-plank was about to be hauled in, a man's voice vociferously calling for delay was heard, and in a moment Mr. Butler, wildly gesticulating, rushed amid the crowd with the missing, and by him until then forgotten, bag of gold.

At San Francisco Booth had a farewell benefit, acting *Lear* for the first time. He crossed the Isthmus by the railroad which was then finished, and engaged his passage on the "Illinois," — the same steamer in which he had left home with his father.

He had sent an agent ahead to make engagements for him, with the strict injunction to avoid the Front Street Theatre, Baltimore, but to negotiate an opening at the Holliday, in the same city. On arrival, he found that he was announced to appear at the Front Street Theatre, engagements in New York having been entirely forgotten.

He went at once to the Farm in Maryland, where he met with a hearty welcome. The country lads who carried in his trunks shook their heads knowingly at the weight of the supposed contents, saying, "*He's* from the diggin's." He had come back older in experience only, for he looked like a boy still, and very fragile; his wild black eyes and long locks gave him an air of melancholy. He had the gentle dignity and inherent grace that one attributes to a young prince, yet he was merry, cheerful, and boyish in disposition, as one can imagine *Hamlet* to have been in the days before the tragedy was enacted in the orchard.

He thoroughly enjoyed the rest among his own family at the Farm, and in a short time opened at the Front Street Theatre, Baltimore, in the character of *Richard III.*

He also acted under J. T. Ford's management at Washington and Richmond, Va., Joseph Jefferson being the stage-manager at the last-named city. It was here that he made the acquaintance of Miss Mary Devlin, whom he afterwards married. On a tour arranged for him by his agent he played in the principal Southern and Southwestern cities, establishing himself as an universal favorite. As previously mentioned, he conceived that after the glow of excitement consequent on his assuming the characters of the elder Booth should have abated, he must naturally sink into the position of leading man at one of the New York theatres. He was diffident of his own power, yet from the first he set himself earnestly to eradicate from his acting every tinge of what he considered an imitation of his father. Schlegel says: "Mere imitation is always fruitless; even what we borrow from others, to assume a true, practical shape, must, as it were, be born again within us. Of what avail is all foreign imitation? Art cannot exist without nature, and man can give nothing to his fellow-man but himself."

However one might grow to love even the peculiarities of a favorite, yet it was these very mannerisms, effective and graceful though they were in the elder Booth, that the younger strove studiously to avoid, for he knew they would be quickly detected and used in the criticisms against him; but there were that same

upright bearing and rapidity of graceful motion, there were tones of voice, clarion-like, sonorous, and inexpressibly sweet, that no art could copy: nature herself transmitted them; they were her dower. He never was a copyist of his father. A jealous analyst could discover, even at that early stage of his theatrical career, evidences of an originality in conception and portrayal which he asserted would attain softness and elegance with the thoughtfulness of years. This conscientious student of men, of nature, and of Shakspeare has well fulfilled the prediction.

Laura Keene, as if to confirm the opinion he held of his own ability, offered him the position of leading man at her theatre in New York; but his continued successes had aroused the ambition of others, if not of himself, and it was decided that he should hold his place as a "star." As an incentive to that ambition came an offer from Thomas Barry, a veteran manager of old Park fame, for him to appear at the Boston Theatre. In spite of all that he had achieved he was not satisfied of his own merit, for he still lacked the indorsement of Boston criticism which he considered necessary. Through a dearth of tragedians, comedy reigned in New York; managers had conceived the idea that tragedy was ruinous to business, and the fancy of the day was to ignore Shakspeare. William E. Burton, the comedian, was at that time the manager of the Metropolitan, afterward known as the Winter Garden Theatre, and through his business manager he arranged with Booth's agent to bring him to the Metropolitan when his Boston engagement should have ended. In ac-

cepting the proposal, he emphatically stipulated that he would open with "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," reserving his reason for doing so. The elder Booth had so essentially identified himself with the character of *Richard III.* that Edwin wished to avoid a comparison which he felt would be detrimental to himself; and moreover, in the quiet scenes of *Sir Giles*, he could feel his way, gradually centre the interest of his audience, and, while working on their sympathy, reserve his force for the powerful culmination. He would be modestly announced, — no loud-sounding allusion to his inherited name and fame, — for he designed to win, not startle, his audiences.

He proceeded to Boston, and opened as *Sir Giles*. It was a cold, dreary night, and he had a thin house. Many white-haired men were in the parquette, which contained more of the passing than the present generation. On the entrance of *Allworth*, the modest personator of that character was startled by vigorous applause from the audience, which, with the laugh that followed on discovery of the mistake, succeeded in taking away his power of speech. When *Sir Giles* appeared loud and prolonged applause greeted him; then (as he described it) the people braced themselves, self-satisfied, in their seats, as if to say, Now, young man, let us see what you can do for yourself. The play proceeded quietly until the fourth act, when the player was on his mettle, for he felt that evening to be the turning-point in his career, —

" This is the night
That either makes me, or fordoes me quite."

This Boston indorsement was to decide his future ; and with a nervous calm he reserved himself for the last great scenes. The effect was electrifying, the call genuine and spontaneous ; he knew his power, and felt that he was safe. The next day his pronounced success was universally acknowledged, and the press was unanimous in his praise. No other city had as yet adopted the custom of giving matinées, but the Saturday morning performance had long been the established rule in Boston, where all places of amusement were closed on Saturday nights. Booth's engagement, which had been in every respect successful, terminated with a matinée, during which his agent had brought him a telegraphic despatch from the New York acting-manager : " Mr. Booth announced for *Richard III.* next Monday. Seats going like hot cakes."

Annoyed and disappointed at this violation of his express orders, he left Boston in no enviable mood, and arrived in New York on Sunday morning. In shame and indignation at the vulgar bombast which would be attributed to him, he read on every available space his own name, coupled with such glaring sentences as, " Hope of the living drama ! " " Son of the Great Tragedian ! " " Richard 's himself again ! " and that hackneyed allusion to the " mantle falling on worthy shoulders," which poetic garment never so sadly hampered his individuality as now ; for if, as it is said, " every man builds his own monument," then for him who is " born great " there can be little scope for ambition or achievement. Yet it was with more earnestness than ever that he studied for himself the hidden beauties of Shakspeare,

whereas but for these difficulties to surmount he might have been less close a student, less meditative a scholar. He obeyed a Baconian precept, and read "not to contradict nor to believe, but to weigh and consider."

He opened on the evening of the 4th of May, 1857. Expectation was at its height to witness the performance of this well-advertised prodigy of genius, whose serious and modest demeanor, however, did not coincide with the idea of the vainglorious young actor who was coming to demand rather than deserve applause. He pleased thoroughly by his Spartan-like action, his grave and sententious speech, no less than by his grace and passion; and, in spite of glaring town-posters, his name on calendars, cards, and shop ornaments, he gained a hold on the theatre-going public which he never forfeited or lost. In the company were many distinguished names: John Gilbert, Daniel Setchell, Mark Smith, Charles Fisher, and Lawrence Barrett.

In the autumn of the same year Booth visited Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston, Savannah, Memphis, Mobile, Montgomery, St. Louis, and Louisville.

In the following winters he travelled through the Southern and Southwestern States. On one occasion he was crowned with laurel, and after a representation of *Richelieu*, in answer to an enthusiastic call, the curtain rose, and the stage became literally strewn with garlands and bouquets; to one of the latter was attached a leather bag containing five hundred dollars in gold. His first engagement in Chicago was at M'Vicker's Theatre, and at that time he made the acquaintance of his present wife, then a child.

A series of thoughtfully written criticisms appeared in the *New York Sunday Times* over the *nom de plume* of "Vagabond." These were subsequently collected and edited in book form by the author, Adam Badeau, who became during the civil war an aide-de-camp of General Grant, and afterward biographer of the soldier-President.

In the year 1857 Booth fulfilled an engagement at the Howard Athenæum, Boston, under the management of E. L. Davenport. Lawrence Barrett and John McCullough were in the company. At this period he began altering and revising certain of his plays, "Hamlet" especially occupying his attention. Costumes and scenery, as well as stage business, received his particular care, while a new reading would suggest itself or comprehension of a thought would develop fresh meaning to his active mind. These plays as arranged by him, with many embellishments, excisions, and curtailments, were the fruit of much serious labor and research, neither study, energy, nor expense being spared in their preparation. It was the conscientious effort of the actor to render his versions concise, clear, and authentic, without marring their beauty or deteriorating from their grandeur. This attractive series of "Edwin Booth's Prompt Books" was edited by William Winter in 1878, with preface, appendix, and observations by that gentleman, and relative quotations from criticisms by the best Shaksperian scholars.

During a lucrative engagement at New Orleans in 1858, Mr. Booth was the recipient of a costly service of plate consisting of a salver, pitcher, and two goblets.

At Charleston he was presented with a similar token of regard. In 1860 he married Miss Mary Devlin, who had retired from the stage the previous year; he then determined to travel less, leaving the Southern and Western States to his younger brother and confining himself to the Eastern cities. He had become the most popular tragedian in the United States. Edwin Forrest was waning in power, and Edwin Booth, now at the acme of a fame deservedly won, had not only in the opinion of friends, but in the estimation of the people, "achieved greatness!" That magnetic power which enchains the ear and rivets the eye was not an acquirement; no practice, study, or artifice could teach him that which was indisputably a gift and an inheritance; but custom and conscientious thought helped him not only to idealize but to subdue his nature and exalt his passions, so that he was in turn each person he portrayed.

An adaptation by Mr. Tom Taylor of "*Le Roi s'Amuse*," entitled "*The Fool's Revenge*," had been sent to Joseph Jefferson from England. He took it to Mrs. Booth, telling her to insist on Edwin's looking at it, the character being tragic and not suited to a comedian. Booth studied the part and performed it several times, but failed to satisfy himself with his rendition or clearly to demonstrate his own conception of the character. In this year, 1860, he acted in it with great success, however, in all the cities that he visited with the exception of New York. He now applied himself to reconsider the character, which he felt had not received justice from his interpretation, and finally made an alteration

of the last act. He performed *Bertuccio* at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, under Wheatley and Clarke's management. As he acted he seemed to realize the full force of the character, and for the first time he delineated satisfactorily to himself the perfect pathos and passion of the part.

Miss Charlotte Cushman and Edwin Booth gave ten performances at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, commencing Dec. 31, 1860. They played *Wolsey* and *Queen Katherine* in "Henry VIII.," *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth*, *Shylock* and *Portia*, *Katherine* and *Petruchio*, to crowded houses. Miss Cushman observed, "that, judging from Mr. Booth's rehearsal of *Macbeth*, he had a refined and very intellectual conception of the character; but she begged him to remember that *Macbeth* was the grandfather of all the Bowery villains." Booth differed from her on many points, and declined to depart from his own conception of the rôle.

In a discussion with Henry Tuckerman of New York, on the character of *Hamlet*, that gentleman, who had witnessed many of the old actors, observed to Booth that they all stood during the soliloquies, and inquired if it were not possible to alter this. On the next representation of "Hamlet," Booth, seated, began the soliloquy "To be, or not to be." Mr. Tuckerman, watching the play, could not conceive how *Hamlet* could rise from that chair with propriety and grace. When at the words, "to sleep, perchance to dream," after an instant of reflection, during which the mind of *Hamlet* had penetrated the eternal darkness vivid with dreams, he rose with the horror of that terrible "perchance"

stamped upon his features, continuing, "Ay, there 's the rub!" His friend was satisfied that the actor had caught the inspiration of the lines in that reflective pause. Booth also introduced sitting on the tomb in the graveyard when, with his face half buried on *Horatio's* shoulder, he speaks, as if to his own heart, the words, "What! the fair Ophelia?" His resting previously on the tomb is most natural and graceful, and, imbued with these qualities, it cannot fail to be effective.

During the summer of 1861, while on a fishing excursion with friends in the White Mountains, Booth received a letter from the agent of Mr. Buckstone inviting him to act in London at the Haymarket Theatre. He replied, accepting the offer, and prepared to sail for England. He left Boston with his wife in September of the same year. He was surprised when Mr. Buckstone informed him in London that a second letter asking him to defer the visit, as he was rather afraid of tragedy, had crossed him on the way. After much discussion Booth allowed himself to be overruled by the manager and consented to appear as *Shylock*. A lady who had spoken with enthusiasm to her circle of friends of the passion and fire of certain of his delineations confessed herself disappointed when he walked the stage, calm to indifference, and evidently annoyed at his support and his surroundings.

On this eventful night every one behind the scenes was more nervous and frightened than the untried actor. His fellow-players, with but few exceptions, were supercilious and disposed to treat the stranger with indignity. One of them was so positively certain of his being hissed



that he was scarcely able to conceal his disappointment at the result.

The prejudice did not extend, however, to Henry Howe or Henry Compton of the Haymarket company, for these gentlemen were particularly kind and sympathetic. His audiences were thin but enthusiastic, and many flattering critiques appeared upon his acting, none of which, however, he had the satisfaction of reading; only the malicious articles, unjust and sweeping in denunciation, were brought to his notice. He had reason to believe that English criticism was a two-edged sword rather than the surgeon's knife probing to cure; yet he received much encouragement from private sources during his engagement of five weeks. He acted four characters, *Shylock*, *Sir Giles Overreach*, *Richard III.*, and *Richelieu*. Mr. Sothern prevailed on Mr. Buckstone to allow Mr. Booth to play *Richard III.*, and the tragedy was eventually put upon the stage, but in such a manner as to seem a burlesque. One man in armor rendered himself ridiculous by kneeling and not being able to rise again, and another lifted his mailed arm and could not lower it without difficulty; their tin armor so clumsily constructed formed a ludicrous contrast to the massiveness of the king's complete dress of steel. Mr. Buckstone reluctantly consented that Booth should produce *Richelieu*. For that event the actors had brought crowds of friends behind the scenes to witness a great failure; and the hisses of the audience, which as yet had not been forthcoming, were confidently expected at this production. Before the close of the first act marks of pleasure instead of the disapprobation

anticipated were distinctly heard ; and even the non-paying audience behind the scenes partook of the enthusiasm. Mr. Chippendale, who had frequently been lavish of kind words to Edwin as a boy and had often professed friendship for his father, held an unwelcoming hand to the hard-used actor struggling against the prejudice and conventionalism of a foreign country. During the fourth act of the play, as Edmund Kean would have said, "the pit rose at him." It was reported that Mr. Chippendale, leaving the theatre, rushed over the way to Mr. Buckstone, saying, he had seen the finest piece of acting in his life. Mr. Buckstone always regretted that he had not opened with "Richelieu."

During Booth's residence at Fulham his only child, Edwina, was born, in December, 1861.

On the completion of his London engagement, Booth went to Manchester, where he acted for three weeks, Mr. Henry Irving being a member of the stock company ; thence he proceeded to Liverpool and fulfilled an engagement of two weeks. A marble medallion of him by Küntze was in the Royal Academy exhibition of 1862.

After a visit to Paris he was presented with the sword which Lemaitre had worn in "Ruy Blas," bearing upon the blade the name "Frederic Lemaitre" and the date of his first performance of the rôle. No theatres were open to him in London on his return from France. Fechter, then at the height of success at the Princess's Theatre, monopolized the Shaksperian drama, and as he was in receipt of handsome offers for New

York, he concluded to leave England, sailing on the "Great Eastern" steamship, which then made her last voyage as a passenger vessel.

On his return from England Booth played a very successful engagement at the Winter Garden Theatre, New York, commencing Sept. 29, 1862. In his support were Mr. and Mrs. F. B. Conway.

At Philadelphia some months later he played *Macbeth*, to the *Lady Macbeth* of Miss Charlotte Cushman, for the benefit of the Woman's Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission, raising upwards of thirteen hundred dollars for the fund.

About this time Booth, on account of the failing health of his wife, decided to take a house at Dorchester, Mass., where he left his family, after playing a few weeks in Boston, to open at the Winter Garden, Feb. 9, 1863. He never saw Mrs. Booth alive again. Her sudden death before he could reach her bedside abruptly terminated his engagement in New York. Mr. T. W. Parsons, in his collection of poems entitled "The Magnolia," has paid a touching compliment to the worth of a good woman in his memorial of Mary Devlin Booth.

Booth did not resume his professional duties for some months; Lawrence Barrett, who was his leading support, filling up the break in his New York engagement by acting *Richard III.*, and continuing with *Ruy Blas*, which Booth had had in course of preparation. On his return he wished to assume this part of *Ruy Blas*, but Mr. Barrett considered it unfair that he should be cast for the character of *Don Cæsar* when

he had already been playing the leading rôle, on its first production in the metropolis. Booth then introduced the scene of *Don Cæsar*, which had been omitted in the English version, and offered it as an inducement to Mr. Barrett, who accepted, and acted the character remarkably well, "taking," as the star said, "all the wind out of my sails."

In October, 1863, the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia was offered for sale. At such a precarious time, during a disastrous civil war, few men were willing to assume so great a risk; but John S. Clarke and Edwin Booth conjointly ventured to make the purchase, feeling that they would be lucky to be able to pay for it entirely in thirteen years. This they did, however, in three!

At Niblo's Garden, under the management of William Wheatley, who had lately dissolved partnership with John S. Clarke in Philadelphia, Booth presented "The Fool's Revenge" for the first time in New York, March 28, 1864, the play meeting with decided success. In his support were Miss Ada Clifton, Miss Mary Wells, Miss Rose Eytinge, and J. W. Collier.

Edwin Booth, John S. Clarke, and William Stuart took a lease of the Winter Garden Theatre, New York, for a term of years, opening the house Aug. 18, 1864, with an engagement of Mr. Clarke. Booth had long desired to have a leading metropolitan theatre under his own control, where he could mount his plays in a correct and elaborate style and confine himself entirely to the legitimate drama. Mr. Stuart was known, however, as the "manager" of the theatre, although his

duties did not extend to the stage department or the production of plays. He received a large salary, and occupied a suite of rooms in the theatre, from which he narrowly escaped when the building was destroyed by fire.

Booth cast his first, and the only vote of his life, for Abraham Lincoln, in the autumn of 1864. A short time after, on the night of Nov. 25, 1864, the three Booth brothers appeared in the play of "Julius Cæsar," — Junius Brutus Booth as *Cassius*, Edwin as *Brutus*, and John Wilkes as *Marc Antony*. The theatre was crowded to suffocation, people standing in every available place. The greatest excitement prevailed, and the aged mother of the Booths sat in a private box to witness this performance. The three brothers received and merited the applause of that immense audience, for they acted well, and presented a picture too strikingly historic to be soon forgotten. The eldest, powerfully built and handsome as an antique Roman, Edwin, with his magnetic fire and graceful dignity, and John Wilkes in the perfection of youthful beauty, stood side by side, again and again, before the curtain, to receive the lavish applause of the audience mingled with waving of handkerchiefs and every mark of enthusiasm.

Nov. 26, 1864, Booth produced "Hamlet" at the Winter Garden, and acted the *Dane* for one hundred nights consecutively, — the longest run that any Shaksperian play had ever known in America at that time. It was more splendidly produced than any other that had ever been presented, with the exception, perhaps, of "King John" and "Richard III.," many years

previously, at the old Park Theatre, under the direction of Mr. Charles Kean, and which, it is said, were comparative failures financially, although most expensive and elaborate productions.

Of Booth's *Hamlet*, at that time, George William Curtis wrote : —

“ A really fine actor is as uncommon as a really great dramatic poet. Yet what Garrick was in *Richard III.*, or Edmund Kean in *Shylock*, we are sure Edwin Booth is in *Hamlet*. . . . The scenery was thoughtfully studied, and the effect was entirely harmonious. . . . Booth looks the ideal *Hamlet*; for the *Hamlet* of our imagination, which is the *Hamlet* of Shakspeare, is not the scant-of-breath gentleman whom the severer critics insist that he should be. He is a sad, slight prince. . . . Booth is altogether princely. His costume is still the solemn suit of sables, varied according to his fancy of greater fitness; and his small, lithe form, with the mobility and intellectual sadness of his face, and his large, melancholy eyes, satisfy the most fastidious imagination that this is *Hamlet* as he lived in Shakspeare's world. His playing throughout has an exquisite tone, like an old picture. The charm of the finest portraits — of Raphael's ‘Julius’ or ‘Leo,’ of Titian's ‘Francis I.’ or ‘Ippolita di Medici,’ of Vandyck's ‘Charles I.’ — is not the drawing, or even the coloring, so much as the nameless, subtle harmony which is called ‘tone.’ So in Booth's *Hamlet* it is not any particular scene, or passage, or look, or movement, that conveys the impression; it is the consistency of every part with every other, the pervasive sense of a mind of a true gentleman

sadly strained and jarred. Through the whole play the mind is borne on in mournful reverie. It is not so much what he says or does that we observe, for under all, beneath every scene and word and act, we hear what is not audible, — the melancholy music of ‘the sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.’ This gives a curious reality to the whole. . . . Booth’s conception of *Hamlet* is that of a morbid mind conscious of its power to master the mystery of life, which, in its details, baffles and overwhelms him. There is, therefore, a serene consciousness of superiority in his behavior, even in the most perplexed moments. In the chamber scene with his mother, when the ghost passes and *Hamlet* falls for a moment prostrate with emotion at his disappearance, the *Queen* insinuates that he is mad. There is a kind of calm, pitying disdain, mingled with the sense that her feeling is natural, with which *Hamlet* steps toward her, his finger on his pulse. The tragedy in ‘Hamlet’ is not only the vital curiosity about existence, the mastering love of life which almost subdues his soul with fear and doubt and keeps it tense with eager questioning, but it is the conviction of a mind morbid with this continual strain that it is a most sacred duty to end another life, to plunge a guilty soul into the abyss of doubt, and that soul the one dearest to his mother. This explains the fascination which the idea of his uncle’s death always exercises upon his mind, and also his inability to do more than dream and doubt over the action. It is this complication which produces one of Booth’s finest scenes. In the interview with his mother he stabs *Polonius* through the arras. For an

instant the possibility of what he has done sweeps over his mind. Always the victim of complex emotions, the instinctive satisfaction of knowing the act done is mingled with the old familiar horror of the doom to which he may have consigned his uncle. With sword uplifted, and a vague terror both of hope and fear in his tone and face, *Hamlet* does not slide rapidly back, and hurriedly exclaim, 'Is it the King?' but, tottering with emotion, he asks slowly in an appalling staccato, 'Is — it — the — king?' The cumulative sadness of the play was never so palpable as in Booth's acting. It is a spell from which you cannot escape."

At the expiration of the hundred nights of "Hamlet," a committee of distinguished persons had arranged to present Booth with a medal commemorative of the event; but it was not yet completed, and he finished his New York season by filling the last week with different plays.

Going from New York to Boston, he was playing a very lucrative engagement, and on the night of the 14th of April, 1865, acted *Sir Edward Mortimer*. On the following morning the news of the great calamity which had fallen upon the country, and particularly upon the Booth family, was brought to him. He left Boston on that evening, and arrived at New York early the ensuing morning, repairing at once to his own home. He was surrounded by devoted friends, who strove by every attention in their power to prove how highly he was esteemed as a public man and a citizen.

Grief and shame, and the dread of having to forfeit his position on the stage, had in the course of a few

months sadly worn his fragile body ; and that introspective look, which some writer remarks as “characteristic of the Booths,” seemed to fit with the lines, —

“I have that within, which passeth show.”

He had thought never to appear upon the stage again, but the more violent the tempest the more subdued the calm which follows ; and the reaction proved as reasonable in this case as the denunciation had been fierce. With conflicting emotions, which required an indomitable force of will to keep in check, Edwin Booth made his reappearance on the stage at the Winter Garden Theatre in the character of *Hamlet*, Jan. 3, 1866, after having been in retirement many months. People came from Washington, Baltimore, Boston, and Philadelphia to witness the event, and the audience comprised many distinguished persons. Outside the streets were thronged, angry threats were made to shoot him ; but on the other hand cool, common sense was heard, and both within and without the theatre the police force was a restraining power.

In his “Sketch of Edwin Booth,” William Winter says : —

“Had there not existed, however, an imperative necessity that Edwin Booth should return to the stage, he would never have acted again. He reappeared on the 3d of January, 1866, at the Winter Garden Theatre. An immense throng of persons gave him welcome, and it was such a welcome as might well have lightened the saddest heart and the most anxious mind. Nine cheers hailed the melancholy Dane upon his first entrance.

The spectators rose and waved their hats and handkerchiefs. Bouquets fell in a shower upon the stage, and there was a tempest of applause. Nor was the welcome less kind in communities out of New York. Wherever he appeared after this momentous return to the stage he found a free-hearted greeting and respectful sympathy, and so little by little he got back into the old way of work, and his professional career resumed its flow in the old channel."

The "Hamlet Medal" (intended for presentation on the one hundredth night) was received by Booth on January 22d during this engagement. It was an offering of appreciation and respect from the chief citizens of New York and students of Shakspeare, and was presented publicly after the performance of "Hamlet." The stage represented a drawing-room. The bands of the principal theatres of New York united in giving the Danish National Hymn. Booth, dressed as *Hamlet*, met the committee on their arrival. Among the vast concourse of people were many eminent citizens; and on the stage could be singled out Admiral Farragut, Major-General Robert Anderson, John T. Hoffman Governor of New York, George Bancroft the historian, Charles A. Dana, Judge Daly; S. R. Gifford, Launt Thompson, Jervis McEntee, and many distinguished artists; and Richard O'Gorman and William Fullerton, members of the New York Bar. The latter gentleman spoke the following graceful tribute:—

"MR. BOOTH, — You have deservedly won a position in your profession which few men have ever attained. The representation of one of Shakspeare's plays for

one hundred consecutive nights to overflowing and delighted audiences is a triumph unrecorded in the annals of the stage until you accomplished it, and is well worthy of commemoration. But it is not alone your success as an actor which has attracted public attention and called forth this demonstration. You have won alike the applause and respect of your fellow-men ; and a numerous body of your friends and admirers, through their committee now here present, desire to present you with some evidence of their appreciation of your genius as an actor, and their respect for you as a man, more substantial and enduring than the fleeting, though hearty plaudits nightly heard within these walls. To that end they have instructed me to present you with this medal. Intrinsically, it is of little worth ; but as a token of the regard of your fellow-citizens, it possesses a significance far more valuable than the gold of which it is composed, or the artistic skill which has beautified it. It was thought proper that this presentation should take place on the occasion of the play of 'Hamlet,' with which your name will ever be associated, and on the very spot of your greatest professional achievements, thereby affording your numerous friends an opportunity of witnessing it. But the choice of time and place for this ceremony has another and a deeper meaning. It intends a recognition of your lifelong efforts to raise the moral standard of the drama, and to encourage you in your future endeavors to accomplish that result. In conclusion, I beg you to accept this gift ; and at the same time, allow me to express the universal wish that you may live to win new triumphs in a profession

which your virtues have elevated and your talents adorned."

The medal is made of gold, and is about three inches in size ; it is of oval form, and is surrounded by a thick golden serpent with its head pendent, over which are the skull of *Yorick*, the crossed foils, and thickly massed bunches of *Ophelia's* flowers. A golden ribbon around the oval bears the motto, "*Palmam qui meruit ferat.*" At the top is the Danish crown, from which hang two heavy garlands of laurel and myrtle gracefully festooned ; beneath, in *alto-rilievo*, is Edwin Booth's head as *Hamlet*. The medal is suspended from a brooch richly chased, with the face of Shakspeare between the masks of Tragedy and Comedy. On the reverse is engraven, "To Edwin Booth, in commemoration of the unprecedented 'run' of 'Hamlet,' as enacted by him in New York City for one hundred nights, 1865."

In January, 1866, Booth and Clarke obtained the lease of the Boston Theatre at a rental of sixteen thousand dollars a year. Offers as high as twenty-six thousand dollars were made by other parties, but the directors preferred these two gentlemen, who managed now conjointly three first-class theatres in the three principal cities. After a very successful engagement in Boston, Booth, on the 23d of April, 1866, made his reappearance on the Philadelphia stage to commemorate the anniversary of the "Birth and Death of Shakspeare." He had not acted in that city for two years, and during a most remunerative engagement of fifty-one nights he performed *Othello*, *Romeo*, *Shylock*, *Rich-*

ard III., *Ruy Blas*, *Don Cesar de Bazan*, *Hamlet*, *Richelieu*, *Petruchio*, *The Stranger*, *Bertuccio*, *Sir Giles Overreach*, and *Pescara*. "Hamlet" was produced in magnificent style, and acted for twenty-one nights, the other plays being many times repeated.

During the occupancy of the Winter Garden Theatre by Booth and Clarke, the latter usually acted there from the month of August until Christmas, Booth following and playing until Easter, Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams and other attractions filling the intervening time. John S. Clarke sold his interest to Booth, and retired finally from the management early in the year 1867, a few months before the building was burned.

Booth produced "Richelieu" in magnificent style on the 1st February, 1866, using the costumes he had brought with him from Paris for another play. Charles Barron was the *De Mauprat*, John Dyott *Joseph*, C. K. Mason *Hoguet*, Miss Rose Eytinge *Julie*, and Miss Marie Wilkins *Marion de Lorme*.

On the 29th December of the same year he played *Iago* to the *Othello* of Bagumil Dawison. *Othello* spoke in German, *Iago* in English, and *Desdemona* (Madame Methua Scheller) in German to *Othello* and in English to the rest of the *dramatis personæ*. "The Merchant of Venice" was the event of this season of 1866-67, and was produced in magnificent style Jan. 28, 1867, running for seven weeks. On the 22d of March "Brutus, or the Fall of Tarquin," was presented, and early on the morning of March 23d the theatre was burned to the ground.

The fire was the result of an accident, and the thea-

tre, which was uninsured, was never rebuilt. Booth lost the whole of his valuable wardrobe, including many articles prized for their association sake even more than for their actual worth. Some had belonged to his father, others to Edmund Kean, John Philip Kemble, and to Mrs. Siddons.

Owing to the great success which had attended the production of his plays at the Winter Garden Theatre, he was filled with an ambitious desire to build a superior edifice where he could indulge his love of the æsthetic and realistic as well as show deference to the legitimate in art. This had been his earnest endeavor throughout his later engagements, and the production of his plays had so engrossed his attention that he had refused most tempting offers from the West ; money at that time being a secondary object. With his mind intent upon pursuing this grand scheme of erecting a theatre on his own responsibility, he now had recourse to the Western managers, and accepted offers that proved most remunerative. He did not act again for two years in New York ; but, having secured the site for his theatre, he travelled and worked laboriously to effect what he now calls "a Quixotic fancy."

In 1867, during his engagement in Chicago, Miss Mary M'Vicker made her first appearance as *Juliet* to his *Romeo*. He proceeded to Baltimore to fulfil an engagement of four weeks, opening as *Sir Giles Overreach*, Miss M'Vicker performing *Margaret*. During the first week, while playing *Pescara* in the "Apostate," he met with a serious accident. Mr. Charles Vandenhoff as *Hemeya*, in rushing to kill *Pescara*, was so excited

that he deliberately stabbed Booth three times in the hand which he had fortunately raised to ward off the blow from his breast. He had neglected to have the sharp dagger blunted, and Mr. Vandenhoff was unconscious how often or how furiously he struck in his excitement. After responding to the call of the audience, Booth for the first time realized how badly he was hurt and on leaving the stage fainted from pain. He acted the next night, however, and for two nights following, in the plays of "Hamlet," "Richard III.," and "Othello," carrying his right arm in a sling and fencing with his left hand, even drawing his sword, which he accomplished by a quick upward movement, whipping it not ungracefully from the scabbard. The next week he was obliged to desist from acting as he was threatened with erysipelas, and the arm had become exceedingly painful.

After a brief rest he was enabled to finish his engagement, performing the two weeks following. He shortly afterward made a tour of all the cities of the South and Southwest for the first time in eight years.

The building of Booth's Theatre consumed nearly two years, during which time he was never idle; the excavations for the foundation were made by blasting a solid rock twenty-two feet in diameter, and the pit dug was the extent of the entire stage. The magnificent structure was at length completed at the cost of over a million of dollars, and was said to be surpassed in grandeur only by the Grand Opera House in Paris. The decorations of the interior were most artistic and delicate; everything was perfect in regard to taste and

elegance. There were no "wings" on the stage, all of the scenery being so constructed as to sink or be elevated above the "flies" by hydraulic power; the stage could be thrown open from wall to wall, and the effect perspectively with the great altitude added to its vastness and grandeur. The theatre opened on the 3d of February, 1869, with the production of "Romeo and Juliet," given in the original text of Shakspeare for the first time in America. The minutiae of stage decoration, costume, and equipment received Booth's own supervision, as their correctness had engrossed his time and labor. In the second act, the house of *Juliet* measured sixty feet in height, and had two balconies one above the other. Two trees measured fifty and sixty feet. For the "loggia" scene in the third act was a line of connected arches of great height extending backward to the full depth of the stage; these flanked a wide courtyard in which the tops of trees were visible, suggesting the idea of depth. *Romeo's* ladder was thrown over the balustrade of a balcony of this solidly constructed house. The "loggia scene" employed fifty men to set and to draw it above the "flies." The production of this play attracted immense audiences for sixty-eight nights, Booth and Miss M'Vicker playing *Romeo* and *Juliet*, and Mr. Edwin Adams *Mercutio*.

The "Moor of Venice" was put upon the stage April 19, 1869, on a scale of similar magnificence; Edwin Adams and Edwin Booth alternating the characters of *Othello* and *Iago*, Miss M'Vicker assuming the part of *Desdemona*. Booth, by an ingenious contrivance, had the scenery of "Romeo and Juliet" rear-

ranged with the addition of a few small pieces to answer every requisition of the "Moor of Venice," thus illustrating that the eye of the master saves the laborer's hands. He kept the theatre open during the summer, and produced the play of "Enoch Arden," June 21, 1869. Edwin Adams personated the principal character, and Booth received a letter from Mr. Tennyson relative to the successful production of his poem.

Booth and Miss M'Vicker were married June 7, 1869. In this year the lady retired from the stage.*

The plays of "Romeo and Juliet," "Winter's Tale," "Hamlet," "Richelieu," and "Julius Cæsar," were produced in most elaborate and costly style. "The Assassination of Cæsar," from Gérôme's great picture, was beautifully copied for the scene of the latter play. "The Moor of Venice," "Macbeth," "Lady of Lyons," "The Iron Chest," "Merchant of Venice," "Richard III.," "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," "Fool's Revenge," "The Fall of Tarquin," and "Don Cesar de Bazan" were put upon the stage and mounted in superior style. They were frequently repeated, and one of the previously mentioned five plays was produced each year. He had been throughout unsparing of strength and energy, and indefatigable in his labor, each department of the theatre dividing his attention, for the onus of this undertaking devolved on himself alone. He travelled and played elsewhere, while other "stars" filled the time at Booth's Theatre, among whom were Miss Neilson, Joseph Jefferson, Miss Bateman, and J. S. Clarke.

* Mary M'Vicker Booth died in New York, Nov. 13, 1881, while this volume was passing through the press. — ED.

Edwin Adams was the leading man of the company, and had the privilege of producing his own plays on Saturday nights, the same arrangement being effected with Lawrence Barrett in the next season. Booth's management of Booth's Theatre was remarkable for the continuity of its success, but the outlay was enormous and the expenses incredible ; he allowed himself rest neither for body nor mind, and, when absent in other cities, sent large sums of money to New York to liquidate his debts.

Finally, the strain on mental and physical health became too severe, and in 1873 he concluded to lease the theatre to his elder brother, J. B. Booth, in preference to other applicants. This management not meeting with the desired success, the theatre passed into new hands, and Booth's monetary affairs became so complicated and embarrassed, owing to his ignorance of the financial details of business, that, notwithstanding his long-continued success throughout the country, the result of this scheme was bankruptcy. Although released from the cares of management he was now compelled to work harder and to travel more, devoting every energy to free himself from the incubus of debt. Out of the failure of this great project, which was a noble endeavor by individual effort to elevate the drama in America and to create for his country a standard of dramatic excellence that should be felt among older nations, came happily renewed strength and determination, not the relaxation of despair or grief for wasted effort that was feared by his friends.

Shortly after his bankruptcy Booth retired for a brief

rest to his wife's country home at Cos-Cob, Connecticut, having surrendered to his creditors all his private and personal property, including his books, pictures, and extensive theatrical wardrobe. While in this quiet retreat he was thrown from a carriage and severely injured in the arm and side. This accident caused a postponement of an eight weeks' summer engagement with Mr. Augustin Daly of the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York. He opened at that house, however, Oct. 25, 1875. During this engagement he produced for the first time his own version or adaptation of Shakspeare's "Richard II." He had never seen the character acted, and had never played it himself. It was a very great success, and has become a favorite part of his because of its eloquence and force. Edmund Kean and the elder Booth had performed this character, but it had fallen into disuse. Edwin Booth desired to restore the tragedy to the stage; and, by reason of its profundity of knowledge, its intimate acquaintance with humanity, and its exquisite diction, it deserves the place he has given it in his repertory.

During this season, under Mr. Daly's management, he produced "King Lear" in magnificent style and from the original text, after his own adaptation of Shakspeare's "King Lear." This, too, was eminently successful. After acting his usual round of characters (but with his maimed left arm in a sling), the engagement terminated. He went with Mr. J. T. Ford of Baltimore on a protracted Southern tour, giving fifty-two performances. He then travelled with Mr. M'Vicker and with other managers, through the Western cities,

successfully fulfilling these engagements and terminating the season in June, 1876.

For several years he had refused all offers from California ; but now that he required a vast deal of money to free himself from pressing obligations, he concluded to undertake the journey at the tempting inducements held forth by Mr. John McCullough. Their train *en route* to San Francisco stopped at several places. They visited Salt Lake City, where he gave a half-promise to act on his return journey ; they went to Virginia City, and in twelve days from the date of starting he arrived in San Francisco, Sept. 5, 1876, exactly twenty years to a day since he had left that city.

His engagement at the San Francisco theatre was attended by overwhelming success. While in California he met his old friend, D. C. Anderson, and together they wandered over the busy metropolis that had overgrown the straggling village they had known. Their "Ranch" was now a tenement in a back street, and the "marsh" was built over ; for the great, prosperous city had reached outward in all directions, embracing the once barren waste.

Booth returned to the East, and opened at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, under Mr. M'Vicker's management, in November, 1876. This engagement lasted ten weeks. The great political disturbance, and the fatal occurrence at the Brooklyn Theatre, burned by fire, with a loss of more than three hundred lives, Dec. 5, 1876, caused so great a panic that all places of amusement were avoided in New York ; and the fright extended to other cities, so that the latter part of

the engagement was somewhat injured. Mr. M'Vicker was very anxious to resign his two weeks' lease of the Academy of Music in Brooklyn on account of the disinclination of the community to visit theatres, but his efforts proved unsuccessful. Booth was obliged to fill the engagement, anticipating a complete failure; but, contrary to all expectations, he played to enormous business. Under the same management he visited various cities, acting three weeks at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, two weeks in Baltimore, and later performing in several towns of Connecticut.

He then appeared at the Globe Theatre in Boston for a period of three weeks, and closed this protracted engagement on the 19th of May, 1877. For this season he had received one hundred and twenty-one thousand three hundred and fifty-three dollars. And his total receipts from October, 1875, to May, 1877, enabled him to settle with his creditors, and obtain release from bankruptcy, the time comprising fifty-six acting weeks.

After a rest during the summer months he commenced another engagement under the same management, on Sept. 10, 1877, in Chicago. He played in Cincinnati, Louisville, Cleveland, St. Louis, Buffalo, Lockport, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, and Albany. In January, 1878, he rented Booth's Theatre, and under his own management acted for six weeks. Later he acted at the Park Theatre, Boston, for three weeks, two weeks at Pittsburg, two at Baltimore, and filled three weeks at Clarke's Broad Street Theatre in Philadelphia. At the Fifth Avenue Theatre in New York

he played for five weeks, then visited Detroit and Chicago. He had reaped a plentiful harvest in all these cities, but he had labored indefatigably and travelled without loss of time.

His engagement at Chicago was for a period of four weeks, beginning the 14th of April, 1879. In the second week, on the night of the 23d (Shakspeare's birthday), he was shot at while playing *Richard II.* There was intense excitement throughout the theatre, and the deed created the fiercest indignation against the offender, who was arrested and secured, but not until Booth rose at the third shot, walked to the footlights, and pointed out to the audience the would-be assassin as the pistol was again levelled at his head. At the trial which followed the man was proved to be insane, and he has ever since been confined at the asylum at Elgin, Ill. One of the bullets, which entered the scenery almost directly behind Booth, he has had set in a gold cartridge cap, upon which is engraved, "From Mark Gray to Edwin Booth, April 23, 1879." This, as a grim reminder of his danger and escape, he wears as an Egyptian might wear an amulet. By subsequent measurement the aim of the lunatic was shown to have been very clever, for had Booth risen at the proper and expected moment one of the bullets at least must have passed through his heart.

The newspapers were filled with wild accounts of the shooting affray, and telegrams, cable despatches, and letters from "troops of friends" served to show him how high he stood in the estimation of his countrymen at home and abroad. He needed such sympathy to

stimulate him in the pursuit of his profession, for so many adverse circumstances seemed to conspire to enervate and overcome his powers. When this engagement closed he gladly took his departure from Chicago, and did not act again until October 6th, when he performed at Ford's Opera House in Baltimore for two weeks, going thence to the Broad Street Theatre, Philadelphia, under the same management. At the Grand Opera House in New York he fulfilled an engagement of four weeks. In March, 1880, he acted under Mr. Abbey's management at the Park Theatre, Boston. It was one of the finest engagements on record, and created the greatest excitement. The sale of seats lasted from eight A. M. until eight P. M. A long unbroken line of people was at the box-office during those hours, and before the close of the second week all the seats were sold for the remainder of the engagement. Crowds were nightly turned from the doors, and every available spot in the theatre was given up for the accommodation of the audience.

At Booth's Theatre, New York, in April, 1880, he played four weeks under the management of Mr. Abbey, and, after an engagement in Brooklyn, performed *Petruccio* at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, for the benefit of "The Edgar Poe Memorial Fund," his last appearance in America before his trip to Europe.

On the 15th of June he was tendered a public breakfast at Delmonico's, New York, one of the most brilliant and successful entertainments ever given in America, and probably the highest compliment ever paid to any member of his profession. The church,

the bench, the bar, the world of letters, arts, and affairs, all gathered to do honor to the departing actor, and to express their appreciation of him as an artist and a man. Speeches were made by Judge John R. Brady, who presided, by Judge Charles P. Daly, Algernon S. Sullivan, Edmund C. Stedman, Rev. Robert Collyer, Rev. Ferdinand C. Ewer, Lawrence Barrett, Lester Wallack, Joseph Jefferson, William Warren, and a poem written for the occasion was read by William Winter.

Booth sailed from New York on the 30th of June, 1880, with his wife and daughter. After spending some months in travel in Great Britain and on the Continent, he opened the New Princess's Theatre, London, on the 6th November, 1880, as *Hamlet*. Subsequently, at this house, he appeared as *Richelieu*, *Bertuccio*, *Othello*, *Iago*, *Petruccio*, *Shylock*, and *King Lear*. Of this successful engagement, and of that which followed at the Lyceum Theatre, London, under the management of Henry Irving, where he played *Iago* and *Othello* with that gentleman, alternating the parts, there is not space to speak here.

Edwin Booth still lives, and still pursues his career of usefulness in his profession. Therefore it is hardly time yet, and it should perhaps fall to the lot of some other writer, to analyze the nobility of his character, and unveil to the public the beauties of his private life. Let it be said merely that as a citizen and as a man Edwin Booth has been always devoted, upright, true; the kindest and most tender of sons to an erratic father and to a widowed mother, in every other relation, as brother, husband, father, friend, worthy of affection and

of all praise. Long may it be ere "Finis" is written in his volume of life !

For what she has said in these pages the writer can only quote for her defence this curt excuse, —

"If I have spent my time ill to write,
Let them not be so idle as to read."

LINES TO EDWIN BOOTH.

WRITTEN IN ITALY, 1875.

IN dim old palaces, in ancient galleries,
Through dusty corridors and sunless aisles,
Thy weird voice taunts me,
Thy strange face haunts me
With sombre brooding or with radiant smiles.

What grand pale faces fill these quaint places !
What sculptured heroes and perfected art, —
Dim clue affording,
And yet according
This deathless beauty with thy living heart.

True art thus purely transmitted surely
Through all the ages ever new, —
Thine artist spirit
Could but inherit
A gift so wondrous, rare, and true.

Some dark grim hero, or blood-stained Nero,
Link thee and Gloster, the Moor, Macbeth,
 While Bruno sainted,
 Divinely painted,
Is Hamlet apostrophizing Death.

Under night's cover, Francesca's lover
Hath Romeo's passion-tender face ;
 And Shylock even
 Declaims to Heaven
In an old Rabbi's holy place.

'T is not home-longing, nor memory thronging,
Nor yet the love 'tween thee and me,
 That thus I trace
 Thy voice and face
In sculpture, painting, minstrelsy !

But, magical spirit, none can inherit
Thine awful greatness, save thine alone !
 From earliest times
 Thro' various climes
Nature preserves her monotone.

From youth to age, this heritage
Guard *thou* with loving jealousy,
 That men may name thee,
 Thy country claim thee,
A son of genius, incorrupt, and free.

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American Actor Series



EDITED BY LAURENCE HUTTON



AMERICAN ACTOR SERIES

CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN

BY

CLARA ERSKINE CLEMENT

With Illustrations



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PREFACE.



HAPPY the biographer whose privilege it is to recount the life of one distinguished for genius and intellect, and at the same time for nobility of life and character. Such is my good fortune in writing of Charlotte Cushman. Her dramatic career will be the subject of this volume, and no space will be found for the picturing of her private life. There is, however, no regret felt on this account, since all that relates to Charlotte Cushman as a woman and as a friend belongs more especially to those who were near and dear to her, and all that concerns the outside world in this regard has been told by her chosen friend and biographer far more suitably than another could hope to tell it.

To Miss Stebbins I wish to express my thanks here for her generous assistance in placing so many of Miss Cushman's private letters at my

disposal. To. Mr. H. A. Clapp, Mr. Lawrence Barrett, Mr. Joseph N. Ireland, Mr. William Winter, Mr. George Vandenhoff, Mr. William T. W. Ball, Mr. Laurence Hutton, and to others also, I am indebted for much valuable information regarding my subject.

C. E. C.

BOSTON, 1882.

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CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN.



CHAPTER I.

1816-1836.

CHARLOTTE SAUNDERS CUSHMAN was born July 23, 1816, in Richmond Street, Boston, her home being next door to that of the comedian, John Gilbert, with whom she played as a child.* Her mother's maiden name was Mary Eliza Babbit, and both the Cushmans and the Babbits were honorably known among the early settlers of New England. Robert Cushman, the founder of the family in America, is credited with having preached the first sermon ever delivered in New England. Elkanah Cushman, the father of Charlotte, was of the seventh generation descended from this pioneer preacher.

Charlotte Cushman made some very short memoranda of her earliest remembrances, and began them with the declaration that she was born a tomboy. Almost immediately she speaks of her powers of imitation,

* In 1867 the "Cushman School" was erected on this spot.

which included not only the mimicking of people who struck her as peculiar, but also that of the cries of birds, the clucking of fowls, and the like. And these powers she did not disdain to use all her life, for the amusement of her friends, or, better, of children, whom she always loved.

During her school days she made her mark in theatricals in her mother's attic, and "brought down the house" as *Selim*, the lover, in "Blue Beard."

When Charlotte was but thirteen years old her father met with such reverses that she was obliged to leave school and seriously consider how she could best earn her own living. She had early shown a love for music, and her voice was considered worthy of cultivation. Her mother's friends afforded her the best means of instruction then at command. She sang more or less in church choirs; and on the following page is the programme of the first public concert at which she appeared, and in which she is announced simply as "a Young Lady."

At last it happened, in 1835, that Mrs. Wood, who appeared in Boston, required a contralto singer in her company. Charlotte Cushman was recommended by a friend. She went to the Tremont House to rehearse with Mrs. Wood, sang at one of her concerts, and from that hour her career as an artist began; for through Mrs. Wood's influence she became the pupil of James G. Maeder, and under his instruction prepared her first part for the public stage.

She made her professional début at the Tremont Theatre, in April, 1835, in the "Marriage of Figaro," Mrs.

SOCIAL CONCERT.

A VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL CONCERT

Will be given by a number of amateurs to their friends,

On Thursday Evening, March 25, 1830,

At the Hall, No. 1 Franklin Avenue, Boston. Mr. Farmer will
preside at the piano-forte.



PART I.

OVERTURE, Piano-forte, Mr. Farmer, "Caliph of Bagdad."

SONG, by a Young Lady, "Take this Rose." Piano-forte accompaniment.

SOLO, Mr. Coupa. Guitar.

CHORUS, "Hunters' Chorus."

DUET, Mr. Pray and Mr. Chase. Flutes.

SONG, by a Young Lady, "Oh, Merry Row the Bonny Bark."
Piano-forte accompaniment.

SONG, Mr. Coupa, "The Soldier's Adieu." Guitar accompaniment. Translation from the French.

PART II.

PIANO-FORTE, Mr. Farmer, Variations *G. Farmer.*

GLEE, "A Little Farm Well Tilled." By Messrs. Stedman,
Barry, and Chase.

RONDO, Messrs. White and Coupa. Violin and
Guitar *Kuffner.*

TRIO, "Sweet Home."

SOLO, Flute, Mr. Pray, "O Dolce Concerto," with variations.
Piano-forte accompaniment.

GLEE, "See Our Bark." Messrs. Stedman, Barry, and Chase.

SONG, by a Young Lady, "Farewell, My Love" . *G. Farmer.*

To commence at seven o'clock precisely.

A. S. CHASE, *Manager.*

Maeder (Clara Fisher) singing *Susanna*, and Charlotte the *Countess Almaviva*. Her second part was that of *Lucy Bertram*, in "Guy Mannering." She went with the Maeders to New Orleans, where, through Mr. Maeder's influence, she was engaged as first lady in the opera business of the St. Charles Theatre, where he was the musical director. Of this time in her life Mr. James E. Murdoch speaks as follows in his book called "The Stage : " " Being much in the society of the Maeders, I frequently met, and had ample opportunity for becoming acquainted with, the young opera singer, and for observing her disposition both off and on the stage. The first time I saw her professionally was in the character of *Patrick*, in the operatic farce of the ' Poor Soldier.' Miss Cushman, in the proper costume of her sex in private life, appeared self-reliant and of easy and agreeable manners, but in her soldier dress on the stage she challenged attention and asserted a power which impressed the beholder with an idea of fixed and determined purpose. Many years' acquaintance with Miss Cushman in public and in private life only confirmed the early impression made upon me by this great American actress.

"The St. Charles was one of the largest buildings of the kind in the United States, and the powers of a speaker or singer were taxed to the utmost for the production of the best vocal effects ; and in consequence of the vigor of Miss Cushman's efforts to carry the citadel by storm rather than by cautious approaches, in a short time she broke down her voice and destroyed her prospects as a singer. Her instructor had frequently

warned her against the folly of attempting the accomplishment of what was not within the legitimate limits of her vocal powers ; he had cautioned her against her tendency to undue force of expression, as calculated to produce throaty tones injurious to the voice. ‘ But,’ said Mr. Maeder, ‘ the young lady knew better than her teacher ; she was almost insane on the subject of display and effect, and altogether too demonstrative in the way of commanding what is only to be obtained slowly and patiently, — operatic success.’ Thus Miss Cushman, disregarding the injunction of an experienced and thoroughly trained master of music, by her impatience of restraint, ruined a fine voice, destroying all hope of operatic honors, and was compelled to turn her attention to the drama.”

There always remained in Miss Cushman’s voice a certain quality of tone which was probably the result of this early abuse of it, — a quality well suited to the deep passions portrayed in her strongest parts.

At this point she consulted Mr. Caldwell, then manager of the principal theatre in New Orleans ; and he advised her to give up the thought of singing, and study to be an actress. She was then presented to Mr. Barton, the leading man of Mr. Caldwell’s company, and after a short time, when Mr. Barton was to have a benefit, he arranged that she should act *Lady Macbeth* to his *Macbeth*. Of this we have an account in Miss Cushman’s own words : “ Upon this it was decided that I should give up singing and take to acting. My contract with Mr. Maeder was annulled, it being

the end of the season. So enraptured was I with the idea of acting this part, and so fearful of anything preventing me, that I did not tell the manager I had no dresses, until it was too late for me to be prevented from acting it; and the day before the performance, after rehearsal, I told him. He immediately sat down and wrote a note of introduction for me to the tragedienne of the French Theatre, which then employed some of the best among French artists for its company. This note was to ask her to help me to costumes for the rôle of *Lady Macbeth*. I was a tall, thin, lanky girl at that time, about five feet six inches in height. The French woman, Madame Closel, was a short, fat person of not more than four feet ten inches, waist full twice the size of mine, with a very large bust; but her shape did not prevent her being a very great actress. The ludicrousness of her clothes being made to fit me struck her at once. She roared with laughter; but she was very good-natured, saw my distress, and set to work to see how she could help it. By dint of piecing out the skirt of one dress it was made to answer for an underskirt, and then another dress was taken in in every direction to do duty as an overdress, and so make up the costume. And thus I essayed for the first time the part of *Lady Macbeth*, fortunately to the satisfaction of the audience, the manager, and all the members of the company."

Thus, when nineteen years old, through her own determination, and unaided by any apparent power beyond that fortune which favors the brave, Charlotte Cushman's course in life was distinctly marked out

before her. Her name, Cushman, signified the *cross-bearer*, and was, among the crusaders, given to the man who was held to be most worthy of carrying the standard. Charlotte Cushman was the cross-bearer in the ranks of American actresses ; she dignified and adorned this honorable office, and proved herself to be fully equal to its duties.

CHAPTER II.

1836-1840.

AT the end of the season in New Orleans, Miss Cushman went to New York, and immediately applied to Mr. Simpson, the manager of the Park Theatre, for an engagement. He offered her a trial, which she felt to be a slight; and before any decision had been made in the matter, Mr. Thomas Hamblin, manager of the Bowery Theatre, called on her and requested her to rehearse for him, saying that Mr. Barton had spoken so favorably of her that he hoped to engage her.

She recited parts of several plays, and he offered her a three years' engagement, at twenty-five dollars a week for the first year, with an increase of ten dollars a week each year. She at once accepted, not knowing then what she so well realized later, — that a second place in a first-rate theatre would have been much more to her advantage than a leading position in a theatre of lower standing.

A difficulty now arose concerning her wardrobe, which was finally arranged by Mr. Hamblin's becoming responsible for Miss Cushman, retaining five dollars a week of her salary. Her affairs then seemed so promising that Charlotte sent for her mother to come with her younger children to New York. Her unusual

cares and anxieties had told upon her vigorous health, and one week before her engagement was to begin Miss Cushman was seized with chills and fever, and was prevented from making her appearance until three weeks after the time intended. As she was to have acted but one month at the Bowery Theatre, and then at some other house, she had now but a single week in which to gain a place with the New York public. Her first night, September 12, 1836, she acted *Lady Macbeth* to Mr. Hamblin's *Macbeth*, with H. B. Harrison as *Macduff*; on the 13th she personated *Helen Macgregor* and *Mrs. Haller*; and finally took her first benefit as *Alicia* in "Jane Shore," with Mr. Harrison as *Gloster*, Mr. Hamblin as *Hastings*, and Miss Ann Duff Waring as *Jane Shore*. This exertion induced a return of illness, and Miss Cushman was again confined to her bed; and, not considering her claim upon her wardrobe as sufficient to allow her to control it, she left it in the theatre, which was burned a few days after. Thus was unhappily ended her first three years' contract, and she was left as unprovided for as before it was made, with the additional burden of her family on her hands.

She next sent to the manager of the principal theatre in Albany, and obtained a five weeks' engagement with him. Her mother and younger brother accompanied her to that city, where she became a favorite, and where her mother's cousin, Governor Marcy, did much for her by his influence and position. Going there for five weeks, she remained five months, and acted in a variety of parts. At the end of that time her little

brother was killed by an accident, being thrown from a horse she had given him. In her "Recollections," when speaking of this death and the grief it caused her, Miss Cushman says: "And I determined then, that, knowing very little of my art as art, I would seek to place myself in a position where I could learn it thoroughly. I became aware that one could never sail a ship by entering at the cabin windows; he must serve, and learn his trade before the mast. This was the way that I would henceforth learn mine."

While in Albany, Miss Cushman was much in society, and is thus spoken of in an account of a great Fireman's Ball given in the theatre: "In all the freshness and bloom of youth, magnificently attired, her head adorned with an immense and beautiful Bird of Paradise,—as she threaded the mazes of the dance or moved gracefully in the promenade, her stately form towering above her companions, she was the observed of all observers, the bright particular star of the evening."

She herself related that it had often been jokingly remarked, that more members of the Senate and House of Representatives could be found at her benefits than at the Capitol.

The reason of Miss Cushman's remaining single has never been told to the world more plainly than she herself has told it in a letter referring to this winter in Albany. She writes: "There was a time in my life of girlhood when I thought I had been called upon to bear the very hardest thing that can come to a woman. A very short time served to show me, in the harder

battle of life which was before me, that this had been but a spring storm, which was simply to help me to a clearer, better, richer, and more productive summer. If I had been spared this early trial, I should never have been so earnest and faithful in my art ; I should have still been casting about for the ‘counterpart,’ and not given my entire *self* to my work, wherein and alone I have reached any excellence I have ever attained, and through which alone I have received my reward. God helped me in my art-isolation, and rewarded me for recognizing *him* and helping myself. This passed on ; and this happened at a period in my life when most women (or children, rather) are looking to but one end in life, — an end, no doubt, wisest and best for the largest number, but which would not have been wisest and best for *my* work, and so far for God’s work ; for I know he does not fail to *set* me his work to do, and helps me to do it, and helps others to help *me*. . . .

“Then after this first spring storm and hurricane of young disappointment came a lull, during which I actively pursued what became a passion, — my art. Then I lost my younger brother, upon whom I had begun to build most hopefully, as I had reason. He was by far the cleverest of my mother’s children. He had been born into greater poverty than the others ; he received his young impressions through a different atmosphere ; he was keener, more artistic, more impulsive, more generous, more full of genius. I lost him by a cruel accident, and again the world seemed to *liquefy* beneath my feet, and the waters went over

my soul. It became necessary that I should suffer *bodily* to cure my heart-bleed. I placed myself professionally where I found and knew all the mortifications in my profession, which seemed for the time to strew ashes over the loss of my child-brother (for he was my child, and loved me best in all the world), thus conquering my art, which, God knows, has never failed me, — never failed to bring me rich reward, never failed to bring me comfort. I conquered my grief and myself. *Labor* saved me then and always, and so I proved the eternal goodness of God."

As the result of her determination to study her art more thoroughly, she made a three years' engagement with Mr. Simpson of the Park Theatre, New York, as "walking lady" and for "general utility business," to commence in September, 1837. This agreement was carried out, and ended in September, 1840.

Meantime, during the spring and summer of 1837, she acted a few times in New York and Boston, and made a starring engagement in Buffalo and Detroit. Of her appearance in Boston, W. W. Clapp, in the "Records of the Boston Stage," says : —

"In the months of May and June, in 1837, Miss Charlotte Cushman gave the earliest taste of that dramatic spirit which she has since cultivated to so much advantage. On the 30th of May she appeared as *Lady Macbeth* to Barry's *Macbeth*, and astonished every one. She followed up her first triumph by playing *Portia* to C. H. Eaton's *Shylock*, and also performed *Fortunato Falconi*, *Elvira*, and *Morgiana*; she announced thus early her predilections for male parts

by a performance of *Henry* in 'Speed the Plough.' Although she had given up, by her assumption of these, all hopes of attaining eminence in the lyric drama, she sung 'Hail Columbia' on Murdoch's benefit night, and was rapturously applauded."

It is difficult to conceive how any actress can go through the amount of labor which Charlotte Cushman performed during her three years at the Park Theatre, New York. In those days long runs were unknown, and would have been regarded as innovations which denoted want of capacity in managers and actors. The public must have novelty; this was supplied by a change of bill each night, while it was not at all unusual to give two or three plays in an evening.

When she finished her engagement at the Park she had been on the stage about four years, and had appeared in the following parts: *Lady Macbeth*, in "Macbeth;" *Count Belino*, in "The Devil's Bridge;" *Helen Macgregor*, in "Rob Roy;" *Alicia*, in "Jane Shore;" *Henry*, in "Speed the Plough;" *Floranthe*, in "The Mountaineers;" *Mrs. Haller*, in "The Stranger;" *Mrs. Lionel Lynx*, in "Married Life;" *Joan*, in "Joan of Arc;" *Margaret*, in "Margaret of Burgundy;" *Jack Horner*, in "Greville Cross, or the Druids' Stone;" *Louise*, in "Norman Leslie;" *Emilia*, in "Othello;" *Alvedson*, in "The Two Galley Slaves;" *George Fairman*, in "The Liberty Tree, or Boston Boys in 1773;" *Lucy Clifton*, in "The Fiend of Eddystone;" *Henry Germain*, in "The Hut of the Red Mountain;" *Portia*, in "The Merchant of Venice;" *Julia*, in "The Hunchback;"

Tullia, in "Brutus;" *Zorilda*, in "Timour the Tartar;" *Belvidera*, in "Venice Preserved;" *Roxana*, in "Alexander the Great;" *Romeo*, in "Romeo and Juliet;" *Elvira*, in "Pizarro;" *Goneril*, in "King Lear;" and *Queen Gertrude*, in "Hamlet."

It was at the Park Theatre that she acted *Goneril*, *Emilia*, and *Queen Gertrude* with Forrest, and won great applause. There is a disagreement among dramatic authors and critics as to the time when she first played *Meg Merrilies*; it has usually been given as in May, 1837, at the National Theatre, under the management of Mr. Hackett. I shall here quote Miss Stebbins in reference to this matter: —

"I have sought in vain among the newspaper files of the period for the absolute date of her first performance of this character; but other evidence settles it as having been in the year 1840-41, during Braham's first and only engagement in New York, and at the Park Theatre. Her own account of it was substantially as follows. But first it may be mentioned that there is one very ancient newspaper-cutting — which is, however, without name or date — in which the fact of her assumption of the part, at a moment's notice, is thus alluded to: 'Many years ago Miss Charlotte Cushman was doing at the Park Theatre what in stage parlance is called "general utility business;" that is, the work of three ordinary performers, — filling the gap when any one was sick, playing this one's part and the other's on occasion, never refusing to do whatever was allotted to her. As may be supposed, one who held this position had as yet no position to be proud

of. One night "Guy Mannering," a musical piece, was announced. It was produced by Mr. Braham, the great English tenor, who played *Harry Bertram*. Mrs. Chippendale was cast for *Meg Merrilies*, but during the day was taken ill; so this obscure utility actress, this Miss Cushman, was sent for and told to be ready in the part by night. She might read it on the boards if she could not commit it. But the "utility woman" was not used to reading her parts; she learned it before nightfall, and played it after nightfall. She played it so as to be enthusiastically applauded. At this half-day's notice the part was taken up which is now so famous among dramatic portraitures.'

"It *was* in consequence of Mrs. Chippendale's illness that she was called upon on the very day of the performance to assume the part. Study, dress, etc., had to be an inspiration of the moment. She had never especially noticed the part; as it had been heretofore performed there was not probably much to attract her; but as she stood at the side-scene, book in hand, awaiting her moment of entrance, her ear caught the dialogue going on upon the stage between two of the gypsies, in which one says to the other, alluding to her, '*Meg*, — why, she is no longer what she was; she doats,' etc., evidently giving the impression that she is no longer to be feared or respected, that she is no longer in her right mind. With the words a vivid flash of insight struck upon her brain. She saw and felt, by the powerful dramatic instinct with which she was endowed, the whole meaning and intention of the character; and no doubt from that moment it became what

it never ceased to be, a powerful, original, and consistent conception in her mind. She gave herself with her usual concentrated energy of purpose to this conception, and flashed at once upon the stage in the startling, weird, and terrible manner which we all so well remember. On this occasion it so astonished and confounded Mr. Braham — little accustomed heretofore to such manifestations — that he went to her after the play to express his surprise and his admiration.

“ ‘I had not thought that I had done anything remarkable,’ she says, ‘and when the knock came at my dressing-room door, and I heard Braham’s voice, my first thought was, Now what have I done? He is surely displeased with me about something, — for in those days I was only the utility actress, and had no prestige of position to carry me through. Imagine my gratification when Mr. Braham said: “Miss Cushman, I have come to thank you for the most veritable sensation I have experienced for a long time. I give you my word, when I turned and saw you in that first scene I felt a cold chill run all over me. Where have you learned to do anything like that?” ’ ’ ’ ”

But the part in which she made the greatest impression while at the Park, was that of *Nancy Sikes*, in “*Oliver Twist*.” After her appearance in that character the public knew her for an actress of high grade. Of her assumption of this part, Francis Courtney Wemyss says, in his “*Theatrical Biography*:” “At length *Nancy Sikes*, in ‘*Oliver Twist*,’ gave her an opportunity of proving what she was capable of accomplishing. As a portrait of female depravity it was pain-

fully correct, and in all her future career she never surpassed the excellence of that performance.” •

It is known that this character was not one that Miss Cushman would have chosen ; for, true as it is to life, and deep as is the lesson it teaches, — appreciated for its dreadful faithfulness when read as the great novelist wrote it, — it is yet one of a class of characters not generally approved when seen upon the stage. But when she acted it she brought to it all her strength ; she did not hesitate to go thoroughly into its lowest depths with the same power as that with which she ascended to lofty heights in her personation of *Queen Katherine* and other noble women. The effect she produced in it was such that frequently, in later years, her managers begged for its reproduction.

In the assumption of male characters Miss Cushman was very successful ; her *Romeo* will be spoken of later ; she is the only woman who ever acted the rôle of *Cardinal Wolsey*.

It is to be regretted that the printed records of this time in her life are few. One testimonial of value is found in a *Boston Journal* of 1863, in which the writer, an Englishman, gives a résumé of his former impressions of Miss Cushman's acting, and says, in speaking of a time more than twenty years past : —

“ In one of my evening rambles about the city [New York] I found myself passing the Park Theatre, and I was moved to go in. There was little, I confess, in outward appearance that was cheerful or exciting. The scenery was poor, tawdry, and inappropriate ; the lights were dim, and the audience not large. The play was

'Othello,' and on the whole the performance was spiritless. In the part of *Emilia* I saw a large-sized, fair-complexioned young woman, not of handsome but of impressive presence. The effect of her denunciation of the *Moor*, after the murder of *Desdemona*, was electric. The few lines of high passion which the part contains, by the power with which the actress delivered them, made the part, insignificant though it is, the leading one on that occasion. By looking at the bill I found the name of this actress was Charlotte Cushman. She was rapturously applauded, and this was the only hearty applause that was given during the evening. I knew that there was no ordinary artist in this then comparatively unknown young woman. I saw her next as *Lady Macbeth*, and my conviction was only the more confirmed by this terrible test of any genius. I went away filled with admiration, resolved to see this powerful actress as often as I should have the opportunity. I then foresaw her fame, and time has justified my prophecy. I saw her frequently afterward, when she played with Mr. Macready, and even with this great and cultivated artist she held her own. She had not had his experience, but she had genius. There were times when she more than rivalled him; when in truth she made him play second. I observed this in New York, and a critic in the *Times* bore witness to it in London. I have seen her throw such energy, physical and mental, into her performance as to weaken, for the time, the impression of Mr. Macready's magnificent acting. She profited, no doubt, by his admirable ability and veteran experience, but she

nevertheless always preserved her own independence and thorough individuality."

While Miss Cushman was at the Park Theatre her sister Susan made an unfortunate marriage, and by the desertion of her husband was left in destitute circumstances with a child. Through the influence of Charlotte she was led to cultivate her talent for the stage, and was engaged at a small price by the managers with whom her sister made contracts. I take the following from an interesting article which appeared in *Appleton's Journal* of March 21, 1874: —

"Charlotte urged the manager to increase their salaries, — hers to twenty-five dollars a week, her sister's to twelve. Mr. Simpson refused, and the Cushman sisters left him and went into the stock company of Burton's theatre at Philadelphia. It was not long before she was called back to the Park at her own terms; it was found difficult to replace one who did so many things thoroughly well.

"In a few months, however, there was a further feud with the manager, and Charlotte felt and exercised her power, for it was on her sister's account and not her own. A certain New York journalist had a lady friend whom he wished to have Mr. Simpson engage for his company. The good parts of Susan Cushman would suit the new-comer. Journalists then, as now, had a very potent method of enforcing their wishes with theatrical managers, and the latter were perhaps even more obsequious. So Mr. Simpson obeyed the dictate of the critic, and announced the change to Miss Charlotte Cushman. The latter protested with stormy and reso-

lute words, and at last threatened to resign. The manager was in a quandary ; he could not afford to offend his editorial friend, neither would it do to drive away the most useful member of his company.

“The critic, of course, heard of the turmoil, and addressed a letter to Charlotte, in which he threatened that ‘if Miss Cushman did not tread carefully she should be driven from the stage, if there was any virtue in a New York audience or power in the New York press.’ This audacious impertinence roused the high-spirited actress to the extreme pitch of indignation. She took the matter to a very prominent editor for advice. He prepared an article in which the case was fully characterized in the language it deserved, and it was printed in the morning issue. That night a tremendous audience gathered to see our actress in the character of *Lady Gay Spanker*. The interest was generally heightened by an anticipation of something like a row, or, at least, a powerful *claque* organized to hiss down the heroine of the evening ; but when, in the play, *Max Harkaway* says, ‘Look ! look ! here comes *Lady Gay Spanker* across the lawn at a hand-gallop,’ there was such a stormy shout of acclamation as set forever at rest any doubts of the hold of Miss Cushman on the public.”

CHAPTER III.

1840-1844.

AFTER leaving the Park Theatre the sisters acted for some time in Philadelphia. Charlotte frequently took male characters in order to give Susan the principal female parts, and in this way they were successful. Later, in New York, in the season of 1841-42, they played together at the Park upwards of ninety nights. The opening night, August 30, "Midsummer Night's Dream" was given for the first time in fifteen years. Miss Cushman appeared as *Oberon* and Susan as *Helena*. On the 28th of September a committee of ladies got up a complimentary benefit for her old friend Mrs. Maeder, on which occasion Miss Cushman took the part of the *Hon. Mrs. Glenroy*, in "Town and Country," while Susan acted *Emily*, in the farce of the "Beehive."

On Oct. 11, 1841, previous to the evening referred to in the last chapter, Boucicault's comedy of "London Assurance" was produced for the first time in the United States. The scenery, furniture, and appointments were finer than any that had before been used on the American stage. The play proved so popular that it was repeated nearly fifty times. It was cast as follows : —

CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN.



CHAPTER I.

1816-1836.

CHARLOTTE SAUNDERS CUSHMAN was born July 23, 1816, in Richmond Street, Boston, her home being next door to that of the comedian, John Gilbert, with whom she played as a child.* Her mother's maiden name was Mary Eliza Babbit, and both the Cushmans and the Babbits were honorably known among the early settlers of New England. Robert Cushman, the founder of the family in America, is credited with having preached the first sermon ever delivered in New England. Elkanah Cushman, the father of Charlotte, was of the seventh generation descended from this pioneer preacher.

Charlotte Cushman made some very short memoranda of her earliest remembrances, and began them with the declaration that she was born a tomboy. Almost immediately she speaks of her powers of imitation,

* In 1867 the "Cushman School" was erected on this spot.

which included not only the mimicking of people who struck her as peculiar, but also that of the cries of birds, the clucking of fowls, and the like. And these powers she did not disdain to use all her life, for the amusement of her friends, or, better, of children, whom she always loved.

During her school days she made her mark in theatricals in her mother's attic, and "brought down the house" as *Selim*, the lover, in "Blue Beard."

When Charlotte was but thirteen years old her father met with such reverses that she was obliged to leave school and seriously consider how she could best earn her own living. She had early shown a love for music, and her voice was considered worthy of cultivation. Her mother's friends afforded her the best means of instruction then at command. She sang more or less in church choirs; and on the following page is the programme of the first public concert at which she appeared, and in which she is announced simply as "a Young Lady."

At last it happened, in 1835, that Mrs. Wood, who appeared in Boston, required a contralto singer in her company. Charlotte Cushman was recommended by a friend. She went to the Tremont House to rehearse with Mrs. Wood, sang at one of her concerts, and from that hour her career as an artist began; for through Mrs. Wood's influence she became the pupil of James G. Maeder, and under his instruction prepared her first part for the public stage.

She made her professional début at the Tremont Theatre, in April, 1835, in the "Marriage of Figaro," Mrs.

SOCIAL CONCERT.

A VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL CONCERT

Will be given by a number of amateurs to their friends,

On Thursday Evening, March 25, 1830,

At the Hall, No. 1 Franklin Avenue, Boston. Mr. Farmer will
preside at the piano-forte.



PART I.

OVERTURE, Piano-forte, Mr. Farmer, "Caliph of Bagdad."

SONG, by a Young Lady, "Take this Rose." Piano-forte accompaniment.

SOLO, Mr. Coupa. Guitar.

CHORUS, "Hunters' Chorus."

DUET, Mr. Pray and Mr. Chase. Flutes.

SONG, by a Young Lady, "Oh, Merry Row the Bonny Bark."
Piano-forte accompaniment.

SONG, Mr. Coupa, "The Soldier's Adieu." Guitar accompaniment. Translation from the French.

PART II.

PIANO-FORTE, Mr. Farmer, Variations *G. Farmer.*

GLEE, "A Little Farm Well Tilled." By Messrs. Stedman,
Barry, and Chase.

RONDO, Messrs. White and Coupa. Violin and
Guitar *Kuffner.*

TRIO, "Sweet Home."

SOLO, Flute, Mr. Pray, "O Dolce Concerto," with variations.
Piano-forte accompaniment.

GLEE, "See Our Bark." Messrs. Stedman, Barry, and Chase.

SONG, by a Young Lady, "Farewell, My Love" . *G. Farmer.*

To commence at seven o'clock precisely.

A. S. CHASE, *Manager.*

Maeder (Clara Fisher) singing *Susanna*, and Charlotte the *Countess Almaviva*. Her second part was that of *Lucy Bertram*, in "Guy Mannering." She went with the Maeders to New Orleans, where, through Mr. Maeder's influence, she was engaged as first lady in the opera business of the St. Charles Theatre, where he was the musical director. Of this time in her life Mr. James E. Murdoch speaks as follows in his book called "The Stage : " " Being much in the society of the Maeders, I frequently met, and had ample opportunity for becoming acquainted with, the young opera singer, and for observing her disposition both off and on the stage. The first time I saw her professionally was in the character of *Patrick*, in the operatic farce of the ' Poor Soldier.' Miss Cushman, in the proper costume of her sex in private life, appeared self-reliant and of easy and agreeable manners, but in her soldier dress on the stage she challenged attention and asserted a power which impressed the beholder with an idea of fixed and determined purpose. Many years' acquaintance with Miss Cushman in public and in private life only confirmed the early impression made upon me by this great American actress.

" The St. Charles was one of the largest buildings of the kind in the United States, and the powers of a speaker or singer were taxed to the utmost for the production of the best vocal effects ; and in consequence of the vigor of Miss Cushman's efforts to carry the citadel by storm rather than by cautious approaches, in a short time she broke down her voice and destroyed her prospects as a singer. Her instructor had frequently

warned her against the folly of attempting the accomplishment of what was not within the legitimate limits of her vocal powers ; he had cautioned her against her tendency to undue force of expression, as calculated to produce throaty tones injurious to the voice. ‘ But,’ said Mr. Maeder, ‘ the young lady knew better than her teacher ; she was almost insane on the subject of display and effect, and altogether too demonstrative in the way of commanding what is only to be obtained slowly and patiently, — operatic success.’ Thus Miss Cushman, disregarding the injunction of an experienced and thoroughly trained master of music, by her impatience of restraint, ruined a fine voice, destroying all hope of operatic honors, and was compelled to turn her attention to the drama.”

There always remained in Miss Cushman’s voice a certain quality of tone which was probably the result of this early abuse of it, — a quality well suited to the deep passions portrayed in her strongest parts.

At this point she consulted Mr. Caldwell, then manager of the principal theatre in New Orleans ; and he advised her to give up the thought of singing, and study to be an actress. She was then presented to Mr. Barton, the leading man of Mr. Caldwell’s company, and after a short time, when Mr. Barton was to have a benefit, he arranged that she should act *Lady Macbeth* to his *Macbeth*. Of this we have an account in Miss Cushman’s own words : “ Upon this it was decided that I should give up singing and take to acting. My contract with Mr. Maeder was annulled, it being

the end of the season. So enraptured was I with the idea of acting this part, and so fearful of anything preventing me, that I did not tell the manager I had no dresses, until it was too late for me to be prevented from acting it; and the day before the performance, after rehearsal, I told him. He immediately sat down and wrote a note of introduction for me to the tragedienne of the French Theatre, which then employed some of the best among French artists for its company. This note was to ask her to help me to costumes for the rôle of *Lady Macbeth*. I was a tall, thin, lanky girl at that time, about five feet six inches in height. The French woman, Madame Closel, was a short, fat person of not more than four feet ten inches, waist full twice the size of mine, with a very large bust; but her shape did not prevent her being a very great actress. The ludicrousness of her clothes being made to fit me struck her at once. She roared with laughter; but she was very good-natured, saw my distress, and set to work to see how she could help it. By dint of piecing out the skirt of one dress it was made to answer for an underskirt, and then another dress was taken in in every direction to do duty as an overdress, and so make up the costume. And thus I essayed for the first time the part of *Lady Macbeth*, fortunately to the satisfaction of the audience, the manager, and all the members of the company."

Thus, when nineteen years old, through her own determination, and unaided by any apparent power beyond that fortune which favors the brave, Charlotte Cushman's course in life was distinctly marked out

before her. Her name, Cushman, signified the *cross-bearer*, and was, among the crusaders, given to the man who was held to be most worthy of carrying the standard. Charlotte Cushman was the cross-bearer in the ranks of American actresses ; she dignified and adorned this honorable office, and proved herself to be fully equal to its duties.

CHAPTER II.

1836-1840.

AT the end of the season in New Orleans, Miss Cushman went to New York, and immediately applied to Mr. Simpson, the manager of the Park Theatre, for an engagement. He offered her a trial, which she felt to be a slight ; and before any decision had been made in the matter, Mr. Thomas Hamblin, manager of the Bowery Theatre, called on her and requested her to rehearse for him, saying that Mr. Barton had spoken so favorably of her that he hoped to engage her.

She recited parts of several plays, and he offered her a three years' engagement, at twenty-five dollars a week for the first year, with an increase of ten dollars a week each year. She at once accepted, not knowing then what she so well realized later, — that a second place in a first-rate theatre would have been much more to her advantage than a leading position in a theatre of lower standing.

A difficulty now arose concerning her wardrobe, which was finally arranged by Mr. Hamblin's becoming responsible for Miss Cushman, retaining five dollars a week of her salary. Her affairs then seemed so promising that Charlotte sent for her mother to come with her younger children to New York. Her unusual

cares and anxieties had told upon her vigorous health, and one week before her engagement was to begin Miss Cushman was seized with chills and fever, and was prevented from making her appearance until three weeks after the time intended. As she was to have acted but one month at the Bowery Theatre, and then at some other house, she had now but a single week in which to gain a place with the New York public. Her first night, September 12, 1836, she acted *Lady Macbeth* to Mr. Hamblin's *Macbeth*, with H. B. Harrison as *Macduff*; on the 13th she personated *Helen Macgregor* and *Mrs. Haller*; and finally took her first benefit as *Alicia* in "Jane Shore," with Mr. Harrison as *Gloster*, Mr. Hamblin as *Hastings*, and Miss Ann Duff Waring as *Jane Shore*. This exertion induced a return of illness, and Miss Cushman was again confined to her bed; and, not considering her claim upon her wardrobe as sufficient to allow her to control it, she left it in the theatre, which was burned a few days after. Thus was unhappily ended her first three years' contract, and she was left as unprovided for as before it was made, with the additional burden of her family on her hands.

She next sent to the manager of the principal theatre in Albany, and obtained a five weeks' engagement with him. Her mother and younger brother accompanied her to that city, where she became a favorite, and where her mother's cousin, Governor Marcy, did much for her by his influence and position. Going there for five weeks, she remained five months, and acted in a variety of parts. At the end of that time her little

brother was killed by an accident, being thrown from a horse she had given him. In her "Recollections," when speaking of this death and the grief it caused her, Miss Cushman says: "And I determined then, that, knowing very little of my art as art, I would seek to place myself in a position where I could learn it thoroughly. I became aware that one could never sail a ship by entering at the cabin windows; he must serve, and learn his trade before the mast. This was the way that I would henceforth learn mine."

While in Albany, Miss Cushman was much in society, and is thus spoken of in an account of a great Fireman's Ball given in the theatre: "In all the freshness and bloom of youth, magnificently attired, her head adorned with an immense and beautiful Bird of Paradise,—as she threaded the mazes of the dance or moved gracefully in the promenade, her stately form towering above her companions, she was the observed of all observers, the bright particular star of the evening."

She herself related that it had often been jokingly remarked, that more members of the Senate and House of Representatives could be found at her benefits than at the Capitol.

The reason of Miss Cushman's remaining single has never been told to the world more plainly than she herself has told it in a letter referring to this winter in Albany. She writes: "There was a time in my life of girlhood when I thought I had been called upon to bear the very hardest thing that can come to a woman. A very short time served to show me, in the harder

battle of life which was before me, that this had been but a spring storm, which was simply to help me to a clearer, better, richer, and more productive summer. If I had been spared this early trial, I should never have been so earnest and faithful in my art; I should have still been casting about for the 'counterpart,' and not given my entire *self* to my work, wherein and alone I have reached any excellence I have ever attained, and through which alone I have received my reward. God helped me in my art-isolation, and rewarded me for recognizing *him* and helping myself. This passed on; and this happened at a period in my life when most women (or children, rather) are looking to but one end in life, — an end, no doubt, wisest and best for the largest number, but which would not have been wisest and best for *my* work, and so far for God's work; for I know he does not fail to *set* me his work to do, and helps me to do it, and helps others to help *me*. . . .

"Then after this first spring storm and hurricane of young disappointment came a lull, during which I actively pursued what became a passion, — my art. Then I lost my younger brother, upon whom I had begun to build most hopefully, as I had reason. He was by far the cleverest of my mother's children. He had been born into greater poverty than the others; he received his young impressions through a different atmosphere; he was keener, more artistic, more impulsive, more generous, more full of genius. I lost him by a cruel accident, and again the world seemed to *liquefy* beneath my feet, and the waters went over

my soul. It became necessary that I should suffer *bodily* to cure my heart-bleed. I placed myself professionally where I found and knew all the mortifications in my profession, which seemed for the time to strew ashes over the loss of my child-brother (for he was my child, and loved me best in all the world), thus conquering my art, which, God knows, has never failed me, — never failed to bring me rich reward, never failed to bring me comfort. I conquered my grief and myself. *Labor* saved me then and always, and so I proved the eternal goodness of God."

As the result of her determination to study her art more thoroughly, she made a three years' engagement with Mr. Simpson of the Park Theatre, New York, as "walking lady" and for "general utility business," to commence in September, 1837. This agreement was carried out, and ended in September, 1840.

Meantime, during the spring and summer of 1837, she acted a few times in New York and Boston, and made a starring engagement in Buffalo and Detroit. Of her appearance in Boston, W. W. Clapp, in the "Records of the Boston Stage," says: —

"In the months of May and June, in 1837, Miss Charlotte Cushman gave the earliest taste of that dramatic spirit which she has since cultivated to so much advantage. On the 30th of May she appeared as *Lady Macbeth* to Barry's *Macbeth*, and astonished every one. She followed up her first triumph by playing *Portia* to C. H. Eaton's *Shylock*, and also performed *Fortunato Falconi*, *Elvira*, and *Morgiana*; she announced thus early her predilections for male parts

by a performance of *Henry* in 'Speed the Plough.' Although she had given up, by her assumption of these, all hopes of attaining eminence in the lyric drama, she sung 'Hail Columbia' on Murdoch's benefit night, and was rapturously applauded."

It is difficult to conceive how any actress can go through the amount of labor which Charlotte Cushman performed during her three years at the Park Theatre, New York. In those days long runs were unknown, and would have been regarded as innovations which denoted want of capacity in managers and actors. The public must have novelty; this was supplied by a change of bill each night, while it was not at all unusual to give two or three plays in an evening.

When she finished her engagement at the Park she had been on the stage about four years, and had appeared in the following parts: *Lady Macbeth*, in "Macbeth;" *Count Belino*, in "The Devil's Bridge;" *Helen Macgregor*, in "Rob Roy;" *Alicia*, in "Jane Shore;" *Henry*, in "Speed the Plough;" *Floranthé*, in "The Mountaineers;" *Mrs. Haller*, in "The Stranger;" *Mrs. Lionel Lynx*, in "Married Life;" *Joan*, in "Joan of Arc;" *Margaret*, in "Margaret of Burgundy;" *Jack Horner*, in "Greville Cross, or the Druids' Stone;" *Louise*, in "Norman Leslie;" *Emilia*, in "Othello;" *Alvedson*, in "The Two Galley Slaves;" *George Fairman*, in "The Liberty Tree, or Boston Boys in 1773;" *Lucy Clifton*, in "The Fiend of Eddystone;" *Henry Germain*, in "The Hut of the Red Mountain;" *Portia*, in "The Merchant of Venice;" *Julia*, in "The Hunchback;"

Tullia, in "Brutus;" *Zorilda*, in "Timour the Tartar;" *Belvidera*, in "Venice Preserved;" *Roxana*, in "Alexander the Great;" *Romeo*, in "Romeo and Juliet;" *Elvira*, in "Pizarro;" *Goneril*, in "King Lear;" and *Queen Gertrude*, in "Hamlet."

It was at the Park Theatre that she acted *Goneril*, *Emilia*, and *Queen Gertrude* with Forrest, and won great applause. There is a disagreement among dramatic authors and critics as to the time when she first played *Meg Merrilies*; it has usually been given as in May, 1837, at the National Theatre, under the management of Mr. Hackett. I shall here quote Miss Stebbins in reference to this matter: —

"I have sought in vain among the newspaper files of the period for the absolute date of her first performance of this character; but other evidence settles it as having been in the year 1840-41, during Braham's first and only engagement in New York, and at the Park Theatre. Her own account of it was substantially as follows. But first it may be mentioned that there is one very ancient newspaper-cutting — which is, however, without name or date — in which the fact of her assumption of the part, at a moment's notice, is thus alluded to: 'Many years ago Miss Charlotte Cushman was doing at the Park Theatre what in stage parlance is called "general utility business;" that is, the work of three ordinary performers, — filling the gap when any one was sick, playing this one's part and the other's on occasion, never refusing to do whatever was allotted to her. As may be supposed, one who held this position had as yet no position to be proud

of. One night "Guy Mannering," a musical piece, was announced. It was produced by Mr. Braham, the great English tenor, who played *Harry Bertram*. Mrs. Chippendale was cast for *Meg Merrilies*, but during the day was taken ill; so this obscure utility actress, this Miss Cushman, was sent for and told to be ready in the part by night. She might read it on the boards if she could not commit it. But the "utility woman" was not used to reading her parts; she learned it before nightfall, and played it after nightfall. She played it so as to be enthusiastically applauded. At this half-day's notice the part was taken up which is now so famous among dramatic portraitures.'

"It *was* in consequence of Mrs. Chippendale's illness that she was called upon on the very day of the performance to assume the part. Study, dress, etc., had to be an inspiration of the moment. She had never especially noticed the part; as it had been heretofore performed there was not probably much to attract her; but as she stood at the side-scene, book in hand, awaiting her moment of entrance, her ear caught the dialogue going on upon the stage between two of the gypsies, in which one says to the other, alluding to her, '*Meg*, — why, she is no longer what she was; she doats,' etc., evidently giving the impression that she is no longer to be feared or respected, that she is no longer in her right mind. With the words a vivid flash of insight struck upon her brain. She saw and felt, by the powerful dramatic instinct with which she was endowed, the whole meaning and intention of the character; and no doubt from that moment it became what

it never ceased to be, a powerful, original, and consistent conception in her mind. She gave herself with her usual concentrated energy of purpose to this conception, and flashed at once upon the stage in the startling, weird, and terrible manner which we all so well remember. On this occasion it so astonished and confounded Mr. Braham — little accustomed heretofore to such manifestations — that he went to her after the play to express his surprise and his admiration.

“‘I had not thought that I had done anything remarkable,’ she says, ‘and when the knock came at my dressing-room door, and I heard Braham’s voice, my first thought was, Now what have I done? He is surely displeased with me about something, — for in those days I was only the utility actress, and had no prestige of position to carry me through. Imagine my gratification when Mr. Braham said: “Miss Cushman, I have come to thank you for the most veritable sensation I have experienced for a long time. I give you my word, when I turned and saw you in that first scene I felt a cold chill run all over me. Where have you learned to do anything like that?” ’ ’ ’ ”

But the part in which she made the greatest impression while at the Park, was that of *Nancy Sikes*, in “*Oliver Twist*.” After her appearance in that character the public knew her for an actress of high grade. Of her assumption of this part, Francis Courtney Wemyss says, in his “*Theatrical Biography* : ” “At length *Nancy Sikes*, in ‘*Oliver Twist*,’ gave her an opportunity of proving what she was capable of accomplishing. As a portrait of female depravity it was pain-

fully correct, and in all her future career she never surpassed the excellence of that performance."

It is known that this character was not one that Miss Cushman would have chosen ; for, true as it is to life, and deep as is the lesson it teaches, — appreciated for its dreadful faithfulness when read as the great novelist wrote it, — it is yet one of a class of characters not generally approved when seen upon the stage. But when she acted it she brought to it all her strength ; she did not hesitate to go thoroughly into its lowest depths with the same power as that with which she ascended to lofty heights in her personation of *Queen Katherine* and other noble women. The effect she produced in it was such that frequently, in later years, her managers begged for its reproduction.

In the assumption of male characters Miss Cushman was very successful ; her *Romeo* will be spoken of later ; she is the only woman who ever acted the rôle of *Cardinal Wolsey*.

It is to be regretted that the printed records of this time in her life are few. One testimonial of value is found in a *Boston Journal* of 1863, in which the writer, an Englishman, gives a résumé of his former impressions of Miss Cushman's acting, and says, in speaking of a time more than twenty years past : —

" In one of my evening rambles about the city [New York] I found myself passing the Park Theatre, and I was moved to go in. There was little, I confess, in outward appearance that was cheerful or exciting. The scenery was poor, tawdry, and inappropriate ; the lights were dim, and the audience not large. The play was

‘Othello,’ and on the whole the performance was spiritless. In the part of *Emilia* I saw a large-sized, fair-complexioned young woman, not of handsome but of impressive presence. The effect of her denunciation of the *Moor*, after the murder of *Desdemona*, was electric. The few lines of high passion which the part contains, by the power with which the actress delivered them, made the part, insignificant though it is, the leading one on that occasion. By looking at the bill I found the name of this actress was Charlotte Cushman. She was rapturously applauded, and this was the only hearty applause that was given during the evening. I knew that there was no ordinary artist in this then comparatively unknown young woman. I saw her next as *Lady Macbeth*, and my conviction was only the more confirmed by this terrible test of any genius. I went away filled with admiration, resolved to see this powerful actress as often as I should have the opportunity. I then foresaw her fame, and time has justified my prophecy. I saw her frequently afterward, when she played with Mr. Macready, and even with this great and cultivated artist she held her own. She had not had his experience, but she had genius. There were times when she more than rivalled him; when in truth she made him play second. I observed this in New York, and a critic in the *Times* bore witness to it in London. I have seen her throw such energy, physical and mental, into her performance as to weaken, for the time, the impression of Mr. Macready’s magnificent acting. She profited, no doubt, by his admirable ability and veteran experience, but she

nevertheless always preserved her own independence and thorough individuality."

While Miss Cushman was at the Park Theatre her sister Susan made an unfortunate marriage, and by the desertion of her husband was left in destitute circumstances with a child. Through the influence of Charlotte she was led to cultivate her talent for the stage, and was engaged at a small price by the managers with whom her sister made contracts. I take the following from an interesting article which appeared in *Appleton's Journal* of March 21, 1874:—

"Charlotte urged the manager to increase their salaries, — hers to twenty-five dollars a week, her sister's to twelve. Mr. Simpson refused, and the Cushman sisters left him and went into the stock company of Burton's theatre at Philadelphia. It was not long before she was called back to the Park at her own terms; it was found difficult to replace one who did so many things thoroughly well.

"In a few months, however, there was a further feud with the manager, and Charlotte felt and exercised her power, for it was on her sister's account and not her own. A certain New York journalist had a lady friend whom he wished to have Mr. Simpson engage for his company. The good parts of Susan Cushman would suit the new-comer. Journalists then, as now, had a very potent method of enforcing their wishes with theatrical managers, and the latter were perhaps even more obsequious. So Mr. Simpson obeyed the dictate of the critic, and announced the change to Miss Charlotte Cushman. The latter protested with stormy and reso-

lute words, and at last threatened to resign. The manager was in a quandary ; he could not afford to offend his editorial friend, neither would it do to drive away the most useful member of his company.

“The critic, of course, heard of the turmoil, and addressed a letter to Charlotte, in which he threatened that ‘if Miss Cushman did not tread carefully she should be driven from the stage, if there was any virtue in a New York audience or power in the New York press.’ This audacious impertinence roused the high-spirited actress to the extreme pitch of indignation. She took the matter to a very prominent editor for advice. He prepared an article in which the case was fully characterized in the language it deserved, and it was printed in the morning issue. That night a tremendous audience gathered to see our actress in the character of *Lady Gay Spanker*. The interest was generally heightened by an anticipation of something like a row, or, at least, a powerful *claque* organized to hiss down the heroine of the evening ; but when, in the play, *Max Harkaway* says, ‘Look ! look ! here comes *Lady Gay Spanker* across the lawn at a hand-gallop,’ there was such a stormy shout of acclamation as set forever at rest any doubts of the hold of Miss Cushman on the public.”

CHAPTER III.

1840-1844.

AFTER leaving the Park Theatre the sisters acted for some time in Philadelphia. Charlotte frequently took male characters in order to give Susan the principal female parts, and in this way they were successful. Later, in New York, in the season of 1841-42, they played together at the Park upwards of ninety nights. The opening night, August 30, "Midsummer Night's Dream" was given for the first time in fifteen years. Miss Cushman appeared as *Oberon* and Susan as *Helena*. On the 28th of September a committee of ladies got up a complimentary benefit for her old friend Mrs. Maeder, on which occasion Miss Cushman took the part of the *Hon. Mrs. Glenroy*, in "Town and Country," while Susan acted *Emily*, in the farce of the "Beehive."

On Oct. 11, 1841, previous to the evening referred to in the last chapter, Boucicault's comedy of "London Assurance" was produced for the first time in the United States. The scenery, furniture, and appointments were finer than any that had before been used on the American stage. The play proved so popular that it was repeated nearly fifty times. It was cast as follows : —

Sir Harcourt Courtly	Henry Placide.
Charles Courtly	Wm. Wheatley.
Dazzle	James S. Browne.
Max Harkaway	John Fisher.
Dolly Spanker	W. H. Williams.
Mark Meddle	W. H. Latham.
Cool	A. Andrews.
Lady Gay Spanker	Miss Cushman.
Grace Harkaway	{ Miss Clarendon. Miss Buloid.
Pert	
	Mrs. Vernon.

This season was a successful one for the sisters, and Charlotte added several new parts to the large number she had previously acted.

In the winter of 1842 Miss Cushman assumed the management of the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia. She opened, September 22, with "The Belle's Stratagem" and "A Nabob of an Hour." I can find no programme of that night, but her company included Messrs. W. Chippendale, Wm. S. Fredericks, and Wm. Wheatley, with Alexina Fisher, the Vallée sisters, and Susan Cushman. The Chestnut Street Theatre was at this time leased by Miss Mary Maywood, and naturally there was considerable emulation between the "rival queens," as Miss Cushman and Miss Maywood were called.

A single season as manager seems to have satisfied Miss Cushman. The next year Mr. W. R. Blake relieved her at the Walnut Street Theatre, and this left her more leisure and energy to devote to her acting; for it was not possible, even with her vigor, to do more than one thing at a time. The fact of her having

attempted it may in some measure account for the deficiencies in her personations, noted by Mr. George Vandenhoff, who played at her theatre early in October, 1842. He writes : —

“Charlotte Cushman, whom I met now for the first time, was by no means then the actress which she afterwards became. She displayed at that day a rude, strong, uncultivated talent. It was not till after she had seen and acted with Mr. Macready — which she did the next season — that she really brought artistic study and finish to her performances. At this time she was frequently careless in the text, and negligent of rehearsals. She played the *Queen* to me in ‘Hamlet,’ and I recollect her shocking my ear, and very much disturbing my impression of the reality of the situation, by her saying to me in the Closet scene (Act III.),

‘What wilt thou do? thou wilt not *kill* me?’

instead of

‘What wilt thou do? thou wilt not *murder* me?’

thus substituting a weak word for a strong one, diluting the force and destroying the rhythm of the verse. She was much annoyed at her error when I told her of it; but confessed that she had always so read the line, unconscious of being wrong.

“I played *Rolla* with her, and she was even then the best *Elvira* I ever saw. The power of her scorn and the terrible earnestness of her revenge were immense. Her greatest part — fearfully natural, dreadfully intense, horribly real — was *Nancy Sikes*, in the dramatic version of ‘*Oliver Twist*.’ It was too true,

it was painful, this actual presentation of Dickens's poor, abandoned, abused, murdered outcast of the streets, — a tigress with a touch, and but one, of woman's almost deadened nature, blotted and trampled under foot by man's cruelty and sin.

"It is in darkly shadowed, lurid-tinged characters of a low order, like this and *Meg Merrilies*, — half human, half demon, — with the savage animal reality of passion, and the weird fascination of crime, redeemed by fitful flashes of womanly feeling, that she excels. . . . *Meg Merrilies* has been her great *fortune-teller* and *fortune-maker*. . . .

"Looking over my papers, I find a most characteristic note from her to me during the above engagement at Philadelphia, which — for it contains nothing confidential — I give my readers as a curiosity. It is written in a bold, masculine hand, something 'like the hand that writ it.' The italics mark the words which were underscored heavily.

'WEDNESDAY NIGHT, Half past 2.

'MON AMI, — After a late supper, prepared for you (but no one could get a sight of you all the evening), and studying a long part, I have to request a great favor of you, viz., to take the enclosed packet for me to Boston. I have to-day written some three or four letters — not of introduction (that might *offend* you), but calculated to do you some service — *to* Boston. I shall only be too proud if they are of any service to you; for, without nonsense, I have scarcely ever seen one I should be more sincerely happy to serve than yourself, — *and no*

humbug! It is a matter of indifference to *me* whether you believe this or not — *I feel it* — and so *God bless you!* till we meet again. You shall hear from me shortly, — and believe me

‘Sincerely your friend,

‘CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN.

‘P. S. Half asleep, a bad pen, no ink, no paper, and as low-spirited as a *fiend!* All *excuses sufficient.*’”

Of her *Nancy Sikes*, Mr. Lawrence Barrett, who had appeared with her as *Fagin*, spoke to me, in substance, as follows: It was an astonishing thing, as well to those of the profession as to the public, — but the death scene was simply superlative in effect; she dragged herself on to the stage in a wonderful manner, and, keeping her face away from her audience, produced a feeling of chilly horror by the management of her voice as she called for *Bill*, and begged of him to kiss her. Mr. Barrett said, “it sounded as if she *spoke through blood*, and the whole effect was far greater than that which any other actress has ever made, with the sight of the face and all the horrors which can be added.” This part was eminently her own creation, conceived at a time when she had had small opportunity for any good training.

It was in the season of 1842-43 that Miss Cushman first met Mr. Macready, whose influence was destined to be so greatly in her favor, by aiding in the fuller development of her talent, and by encouraging her to seek and to win fame in Great Britain. She always said that her professional life began when she met him.

In Macready's Diary, under date of October 23, he thus speaks of Miss Cushman, with whom he had acted for the first time : —

“ The Miss Cushman who acted *Lady Macbeth* interested me much. She has to learn her art, but she showed mind and sympathy with me, — a novelty so refreshing to me on the stage.”

In December, 1843, at Mr. Macready's request, Miss Cushman went to the Park Theatre in New York, and acted *Evadne* to his *Melantius*, in Knowles's tragedy of “ The Bridal.” She also appeared as *Beatrice* to his *Benedick* the first time he acted that part ; and finally, on December 15, — Macready's benefit night and farewell before going South, — his adaptation of Byron's “ Marino Faliero ” was given with this cast : —

Marino Faliero	Mr. Macready.
Bertuccio Faliero	A. Andrews.
Leoni	Henry V. Lovell.
Benintende	Wm. A. Vache.
Michel Steno	Mr. Toomer.
Israel Bertuccio	John Ryder.
Philip Calandero	Thos. A. Lyne.
Dagolino	Wm. Wheatley.
Vincenza	John Crocker.
Battista	Henry Hunt.
Angiolina	Miss Cushman.
Marianna	Miss Cecelia McBride.

After her first appearance with Mr. Macready, Miss Cushman wrote to her mother : “ In great haste I write only a few words, with a promise to write again to-night after the play, and tell you all particulars of my great and triumphant success of last night, — of

my reception, of being called out after the play, and hats and handkerchiefs waved to me, flowers sent to me, etc."

In the "Cushman Genealogy" there is an interesting account of her, in which we read : —

"This engagement forms an era in the history of Miss Cushman of no slight importance, and one of which, we may say with propriety, she had great reason to be proud. It will be admitted by all that the eminent position of that great master, the professional station of Mr. Macready, was the foremost in the art ; that he might have chosen from the world any partner in his triumphs he chose ; and that the choice from so distinguished a person necessarily conveyed a compliment of no insignificant order. Choosing Miss Cushman, he selected her from all the world, and together they achieved wonders.

"Their engagement together in Boston at the Melodeon, which concluded at the middle of October, 1844, was the most brilliant theatrical engagement ever played in that city, in many respects ; and it certainly will not be denied that during its continuance persons visited the theatre who had never countenanced dramatic representations, and whose lofty souls found sweeter communion with the bards in the closet than with their mutilation upon the stage. Frequently visiting the Melodeon might be seen such lights of the age as the Hon. Daniel Webster, the Hon. Charles Sumner, Judges Story and Shaw, the "Old Man Eloquent," Professor Henry W. Longfellow, — all listeners and admirers as well of Miss Cushman as of Mr. Macready."

The newspapers of the time were unsparing in her praise, and one of them thus spoke of her : —

“Miss Cushman possesses the elements of a fine actress ; with an imposing person, she has a vigorous mind ; she can conceive forcibly and utter nobly. By her careful preparation she shows that she loves her art ; and therefore her industry is equal to her enthusiasm. Those who labor to reach an elevated standard, in every effort to satisfy themselves, will gain success with others. Miss Cushman makes progress in this onward course ; she grows daily in favor, and yet favor must increase rapidly if it outrun her merits. Although characters of a solemn and tragic order suit her best, in the most austere impersonations gleams are ever and anon let in upon the darkness, which reveal a gentle and kindly womanhood.”

Miss Cushman now decided to go to England, and made her farewell appearance at the Park Theatre, New York, Oct. 25, 1844. The play was “*Much Ado About Nothing*,” and Mr. Vandenhoff acted *Benedick* to her *Beatrice*. In his Note Book he thus speaks of it : —

“The house was by no means full ; and she played *Beatrice*, that night, carelessly or over-anxiously, I don’t know which, — the effect of either is much the same. I recollect particularly, that she ran part of one act into another in a scene with me, in a very perplexed and perplexing manner. When we came off she exclaimed :

“‘For heaven’s sake, what have I been doing?’

“‘Knocking the fourth and fifth acts together extemporaneously,’ I replied.

“The fact is, she was disappointed with the house, the result being then of some moment to her. That audience little dreamt with what an accession of reputation and fortune she would return amongst them !”

To those who only knew Miss Cushman in later years it seems incredible that she should ever have acted all the parts that have been named in this and the preceding chapters ; not only on account of the immense labor they required, but also from the apparent unsuitableness of many of them to her powers as they appeared when grandly developed and when, with the repertoire of *Lady Macbeth*, *Meg Merrilies*, and *Queen Katherine*, she had the world at her feet.

Some of Miss Cushman’s admirers seem to be mistaken in supposing that she reached her height at this early date, — at a bound, so to speak. It is certainly more logical, as well as more creditable to her, to say that from year to year her appreciation and rendering of these great characters grew brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. And thus it was ; for many who had always praised and loved her know that never was she so grand, never so much the noble queen, as when, in her last appearance as *Katherine* in Boston, these words rang out : —

“ I will not tarry ; no, nor ever more,
Upon this business, my appearance make
In any of their courts.”

The following lines, bearing Miss Cushman’s name and printed in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, are supposed to have been written about this time : —

LINES BY CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN.

SUGGESTED BY A VISIT TO THE SHAKER SETTLEMENT, NEAR ALBANY.

Mysterious worshippers !
Are you indeed the things you seem to be,
Of earth, — yet of its iron influence free
 From all that stirs
Our being's pulse, and gives to fleeting life
What well the Hun has termed "the rapture of the
 strife" ?

Are the gay visions gone,
Those day-dreams of the mind by fate there flung,
And the fair hopes to which the soul once clung,
 And battled on ?
Have ye outlived them, — all that must have sprung
And quickened into life when ye were young ?

Does memory never roam
To ties that, grown with years, ye idly sever ;
To the old haunts that ye have left forever,
 Your early homes ;
Your ancient creed, once faith's sustaining lever ;
The loved who erst prayed with you — now may never ?

Has not ambition's pæan
Some power within your hearts to wake anew
To deeds of higher emprise — worthier you,
 Ye monkish men,
Than may be reaped from fields ? Do ye not rue
The drone-like course of life ye now pursue ?

The camp, the council, — all
That wooes the soldier to the field of fame,
That gives the sage his meed, the bard his name
And coronal,
Bidding a people's voice their praise proclaim, —
Can ye forego the strife, nor own your shame ?

Have ye forgot your youth,
When expectation soared on pinions high,
And hope shone out on boyhood's cloudless sky,
Seeming all truth ;
When all looked fair to fancy's ardent eye,
And pleasure wore an air of sorcery ?

You, too ! What early blight
Has withered your fond hopes, that ye thus stand,
A group of sisters, 'mong this monkish band ?
Ye creatures bright !
Has sorrow scored your brows with demon hand,
Or o'er your hopes passed treachery's burning brand ?

Ye would have graced right well
The bridal scene, the banquet, or the bowers
Where mirth and revelry usurp the hours ;
Where, like a spell,
Beauty is sovereign, where man owns its powers,
And woman's tread is o'er a path of flowers.

Yet seem ye not as those
Within whose bosoms memories vigils keep :
Beneath your drooping lids no passions sleep ;
And your pale brows
Bear not the tracery of emotion deep, —
Ye seem too cold and passionless to weep !

CHAPTER IV.

1844-1847.

WHEN Macready bade Miss Cushman good-bye, his last words to her were, "Come to England, where your talents will be appreciated at their true value."

It is doubtful if without his encouragement Miss Cushman would have taken this great step; for we know from her own records of this time that she was herself very doubtful as to what manner of reception she should meet with; and, in fact, she was careful, out of the small sum which she had saved, to keep enough in hand to bring her home again in case of her failure.

In her diary, kept during her voyage, she records her doubts and fears, regrets her ambition, and questions whether it would not have been wiser for her to have remained content with the moderate competency which she was sure of at home, than to subject herself to "miserable, frightful uncertainty," and all the anxieties and labors which must ensue. Added to this was the ever haunting thought that all might end in a disaster that would weaken her hold upon the American public, and be worse than the mortification of a failure abroad.

She speaks with tender affection of her family, and of her deep sorrow at being separated from them by so

great a distance ; but at length, before the voyage was over, her accustomed energy and will asserted themselves, and she determined not to acknowledge the possibility of mischance. She had sailed with the thought of a six months' absence. She now declares that, if she acts at all, she will not return to her home and friends until she has achieved such success as they would wish for her ; and adds, that though a longer period than that mentioned would seem an age, yet she will summon patience to her aid, and conquer all.

In her diary she copied, as if for comfort and encouragement, that much prized sentence from "Hyperion : " "Look not mournfully into the past ; it comes not back again. Wisely improve the present ; it is thine. Go forth into the shadowy future without fear and with a manly heart." Also from Browning's "Paracelsus " the passage beginning, —

"What though
It be so? — if indeed the strong desire
Eclipse the aim in me?"

One sentence from this passage was always a favorite of hers : —

. "Be sure that God ne'er dooms to waste
The strength he deigns impart."

Miss Cushman reached England, Nov. 18, 1844. She was accompanied by the most faithful of waiting-women, Sally Mercer, who from that time was what Miss Cushman called her, "her right hand," as long as her mistress lived. After a week in Liverpool Miss Cushman went through Scotland with a party of

her fellow-passengers, and by the time she reached London was restored to health and spirits.

Miss Cushman showed much self-control and sagacity in her course concerning her appearance before the London public. After using such exertions as seemed proper to her, and failing to make an engagement, she went over to Paris, where Macready was acting with Miss Helen Faucit, under the management of Mr. Mitchell. Upon her arrival at Liverpool she had received letters from Mr. Macready, asking her to join him in Paris. He told her that he could not assure her leading parts, but she could make a beginning. She replied : " Can I have *Lady Macbeth* ? I will accede to your wishes in all other things." This Macready could not promise, as Miss Faucit was already alarmed by the praises of Miss Cushman which she had heard from him.

So, as has been said, she went to Scotland, passed some time in London, and finally went to Paris, because she had time at command, and wished to see all she could of the world and of good acting. One writer, in speaking of this period, says : —

" Manager Mitchell had had some trouble with *la belle* Faucit, and was anxious to whip the fair rebel back into traces. So, at the instigation, perhaps, of Macready, he offered 'leading business' to Miss Cushman. The latter disdained to build her own promotion on the downfall of another. She could remain in obscurity, she could return to the old subordinate drudgery, but she could not soil her own fine sense of professional honor. She knew Macready's persistence

and magnetism, and rather than subject herself to more urging she fled back to England without another interview."

Concerning the manner of Miss Cushman's engagement with Maddox, the manager of the Princess's Theatre, there are two accounts. I shall give both of them. The first is, that when Maddox was to bring out Forrest he wished to engage Miss Cushman as his support, and that she replied to his proposition: "I will accede on certain conditions. In the first place, ten pounds a night; in the second, I must have one night before Forrest comes for my *début* in a great part. I will play *Bianca*." To these conditions Maddox finally assented. The writer continues: —

"That Thursday night, big with her fate, arrived, and the curtain went up on a cold and meagre audience. The first two acts passed tamely enough, for the company supporting her seemed utterly indifferent to their work; but in the third act the audience commenced to look at each other and wonder, and their hearts to burn. The passionate intensity of the *Bianca* electrified, too, the inert stocks with which she was surrounded, and they were involuntarily swept, by the magnetic power that seemed to radiate from her, into something like *rapprochement* in their own acting. But in the fourth act Miss Cushman carried everything before her. The mighty passion and agony of the last great scene was so overpowering that the actress fainted away at its close, and she had to be supported in front of the curtain to acknowledge the continued and tumultuous thunders of applause with which that English audience

welcomed the rise of another great light on their dramatic horizon.

“She slept that night with an infinite peace in her heart. The triumph that she had looked forward to and labored over for ten long years of anguish, suffering, toil, and want of appreciation, had at last come, and in such full measure as to gratify her utmost wishes.”

The second account of the engagement is that of Mr. Vandenhoff, who gives it as from Maddox’s own lips. If not as flattering to Miss Cushman, in one sense, as the above, it forcibly presents her wondrous power to make herself felt in spite of prejudices and adverse circumstances of any kind : —

“The manner in which she obtained her first engagement in London is so characteristic of the spirit and *pluck* of the woman, that I cannot resist telling it as it was related to me by Maddox, the manager of the Princess’s Theatre (1845).

“On her first introduction to him Miss Cushman’s personal gifts did not strike him as exactly those which go to make up a stage heroine, and he declined engaging her. Charlotte had certainly no great pretensions to beauty, but she had perseverance and energy, and knew that there was the right metal in her ; so she went to Paris with a view to finding an engagement there with an English company. She failed, too, in that, and returned to England more resolutely than ever bent on finding employment there, because it was now more than ever necessary to her. It was a matter of life and death, almost. She armed herself, therefore,

with letters (so Maddox told me) from persons who were likely to have weight with him, and again presented herself at the Princess's; but the little Hebrew was as obdurate as *Shylock*, and still declined her proffered services. Repulsed, but not conquered, she rose to depart; but as she reached the door she turned and exclaimed: 'I know I have enemies in this country; but' (and here she cast herself on her knees, raising her clenched hand aloft) 'so help me ——! I'll defeat them!' She uttered this with the energy of *Lady Macbeth*, and the prophetic spirit of *Meg Merrilies*. 'Helho!' said Maddox to himself, 's' help me! she's got de shtuff in her!' and he gave her an appearance, and afterwards an engagement in his theatre."

Of her first appearance as *Bianca*, in "Fazio," the journals spoke with enthusiasm. The *London Sun* said: —

"America has long owed us a heavy dramatic debt for enticing away from us so many of our best actors. She has now more than repaid it by giving us the greatest of actresses, Miss Cushman. This lady made her first appearance before an English audience at Princess's Theatre last evening; and since the memorable first appearance of Edmund Kean, in 1814, never has there been such a *début* on the boards of an English theatre. She is, without exception, the very first actress that we have. True, we have very lady-like, accomplished, finished *artistes*, but there is a wide and impassable gulf between them and Miss Cushman, — the gulf which divides talent, even of the very highest order, from genius. That godlike gift is Miss Cushman's,

strictly speaking. She is no *artiste*, or if she is, hers is that highest reach of the art, *ars celare artem*."

The *Times* gave its verdict as follows : —

"The great characteristics of Miss Cushman are her earnestness, her intensity, her quick apprehension of 'readings,' her power to dart from emotion to emotion with the greatest rapidity, as if carried on by impulse alone. The early part of the play affords an audience no criterion of what an actress can do ; but from the instant where she suspects that her husband's affections are wavering, and with a flash of horrible enlightenment exclaims, '*Fazio*, thou hast seen *Aldabella*!' Miss Cushman's career was certain. The variety which she threw into the dialogue with her husband — from jealousy dropping back into tenderness, from hate passing to love, while she gave an equal intensity to each successive passion, as if her whole soul were for the moment absorbed in that only — was astonishing, and yet she always seemed to feel as if she had not done enough. Her utterance was more and more earnest, more and more rapid, as if she hoped the very force of the words would give her an impetus. The crowning effort was the supplication to *Aldabella*, when the wife, falling on her knees, makes the greatest sacrifice of her pride to save the man she has destroyed. Nothing could exceed the determination with which, lifting her clasped hands, she urged her suit, — making offer after offer to her proud rival, as if she could not give too much, and feared to reflect on the value of her concessions, — till at last, repelled by the cold Marchioness and exhausted by her own passion, she sank huddled

into a heap at her feet. Of the whole after-part of the drama, which was distinguished throughout by a sustained energy, this was her great triumph. We need hardly say that Miss Cushman is likely to prove a great acquisition to the London stage. For passion — real, impetuous, irresistible passion — she has not at present her superior."

The *London Herald* said : —

"Miss Cushman is tall and commanding, having a fine stage figure. The expression of her face is curious, reminding us of Macready, — a suggestion still further strengthened by the tones of her voice, and frequently by her mode of speech. But that is nothing. She soon proved that she was a great artist on her own account ; that she not only possessed peculiar sensitiveness, but that she had all the tact and efficiency resulting from experience. Her energy never degenerated into bombast, and rarely was she artificial. There are several situations in the tragedy requiring the most consummate skill on the part of the actress to render them fully effective, and she achieved at each successive point a fresh triumph. Her tenderness is beautifully energetic and impassioned, while her violence, such as when the sentiment of jealousy suddenly crosses her, is broad and overwhelming, but at the same time not overdone. Miss Cushman is altogether a highly accomplished actress, and it may be easily foreseen that her career in this country will be a most brilliant one."

She next appeared with Forrest in "Macbeth," and the honors of the night were hers, as on this occasion Forrest was received with marks of disapprobation ;

which proves that the dislike of him was personal, and not a prejudice against American actors, since favors were at the same moment showered upon Miss Cushman.

This fact, however, led Forrest to believe that Miss Cushman had entered into a league against him, and from that moment there existed a fierce hatred between them. He never forgave the imaginary meanness he had imputed to her, and she disliked him heartily for thus misjudging her. She even went so far as to insist that he was not a good actor ! And yet it is probable that somewhere, deep in their own hearts, they respected and admired each other, as is indicated by the following story. They both happened to be one evening at the same theatre when an autograph hunter presented himself to Miss Cushman and asked if she would write her name, adding that he should also ask the same favor of Mr. Forrest. Miss Cushman said : " Go first to him ; I cannot take precedence of so great a man." The collector went as directed, and, without telling Mr. Forrest of the conversation, said he should also request Miss Cushman to write her name. Forrest then replied in almost the precise words that Miss Cushman had used, — that he would follow, not precede so great a woman.

Her engagement at the Princess's was continued through eighty-four nights. Under date of March 2, 1845, she wrote to her mother : —

" By the packet of the 10th I wrote you a few lines and sent a lot of newspapers, which could tell you in so much better language than I could of my brilliant and triumphant success in London. I can say no more to

you than this, — that it is far, far beyond my most *sanguine expectations*. In my most ambitious moments I never dreamed of the success which has awaited me and crowned every effort I have made. To you I should not hesitate to tell *all* my grief and all my failure if it had been such, for no one could have felt more with me and for me. Why then should I hesitate (unless through a fear that I might seem egotistical) to tell you all my triumphs, all my success? Suffice it, — *all my successes put together since I have been upon the stage* would not come near my success in London ; and I only wanted some one of you here to enjoy it with me to make it complete.”

On March 28, after telling of her many calls, invitations, and other personal compliments, she says : —

“It seems almost exaggerated, this account ; but indeed you would laugh if you could see the way in which I am besieged, and if you could see the heaps of complimentary letters and notes you would be amused. All this, as you may imagine, reconciles me more to England, and now I think I might be willing to stay longer. If my family were only with me I think I could be content. Sergeant Talfourd has promised to write a play for me by next year. I have played *Bianca* four times, *Emilia* twice, *Lady Macbeth* six times, *Mrs. Haller* five, and *Rosalind* five, in five weeks. I am sitting to five artists, so you may see I am very busy. I hesitate to write even to you the agreeable and complimentary things that are said and done to me here, for it looks monstrously like boasting. I like you to know it, but I hate to tell it to you myself.”

The engagements which Miss Cushman had made in Liverpool, Edinburgh, Dublin, and other cities were given up on account of her London success ; and in the early summer her family went to her in England, and she established them in a house in Bayswater.

The opinions of the London press of that time upon her various personations are now a matter of history, and are of great interest, serving as they do to remind us that, great as she was in her few later characters, her power was not limited by them. Some of the most ably written criticisms are in part given here : —

“ On Thursday night Miss Cushman gave us the first opportunity of seeing her in a Shakespearian character, — the sweet, merry, mocking, deep-feeling, true, loving *Rosalind*, whose heart and head are continually playing at cross-purposes ; . . . whilst under her womanly guise the *Rosalind* of Miss Cushman was a high-bred though most gentle and sweet-tempered lady, with the mirthful spirit which nature had given to her saddened by the misfortunes of herself and father ; but, with the indignant reply which she makes to the *Duke*, her uncle, on being banished as a traitor, this phase of her character disappears. No sooner is the plan of flight conceived and resolved upon, and the words uttered,

‘ Were it not better,
Because that I am more than common tall,
That I did suit me all points like a man ? ’

than all sadder thoughts disappear to make room for the overflowing spirits of the woman. Love itself is put as a mark to be shot at by wit ; or rather it is love that arms wit against itself, and gives it all its point.

“But we hear some one say, ‘You are speaking of *Rosalind*, instead of the lady who enacted the part on Thursday night.’ We beg to say it is one and the same thing. If ever we looked upon, heard, conceived *Rosalind*, it was upon that occasion. If ever we listened to the playful wit, the sweet mocking, the merry laugh of *Rosalind*, if ever we saw her graceful form, her merry eye, her arched brows, her changing looks, it was then and there. Mrs. Nesbit’s *Rosalind* was a sweet piece of acting, full of honey ; Madame Vestris’s *Rosalind* is all grace and coquetry ; Miss Helen Faucit’s (by far the best of them) is full of wit, mirth, and beauty ; but Miss Cushman *was* *Rosalind*. . . . We must confess that, after seeing Miss Cushman in *Bianca* and *Mrs. Haller*, we thought her genius essentially tragic ; and had we seen her only in *Rosalind*, we should have thought it essentially comic ; but the fact is, as with Shakespeare himself, and most other great poets, the highest genius necessarily embraces both elements of tragic and comic. . . .

“Miss Cushman’s features, if they are deficient in regular beauty, have that flexibility which makes every expression natural to them, and causes them to reflect each thought which passed through the author’s brain as he drew the character. Never did we hear Shakespeare’s language more perfectly enunciated. Not a syllable was lost, and each syllable was a note. The beauties of the author were as clear, as transparent, as though the thoughts themselves, instead of the words which are their vehicles, were transfused through the senses ; eye, ear, heart, took them in, in that perfect form in which they were conceived.

“Now, what is the secret of Miss Cushman’s success in characters so widely differing from each other as *Bianca*, *Lady Macbeth*, and *Rosalind*? It is earnestness. She is earnest in whatever she undertakes. She thinks nothing of individual self, but everything of that other self with which for the time she is identified, so that she becomes the very character which she represents ; and no actor or actress who does not possess this power can ever become great.”

At Bayswater Miss Cushman studied *Romeo*, and her sister Susan, *Juliet*, and after acting in Southampton they began their engagement with this tragedy, Dec. 30, 1845, at the Haymarket Theatre.

At first there was trouble concerning some deviations from the usual manner of playing it, which Miss Cushman insisted on. She was determined to follow the original Shakespeare. This was unusual, and the English support were not willing to be led by what they, in the usual manner of their countrymen at that period, chose to term “American Indians ;” but the manager, Mr. Webster, supported Miss Cushman, and when she had made a grand success in her own way there was no more to be said. The play achieved what at that time was an almost unheard of popularity, and had a run of eighty nights in London. Naturally, after being thus sealed with the approbation of the metropolis, it was equally approved in the provinces.

It is said, by those who knew Miss Cushman best, that the assumption of male characters was not wholly agreeable to her. During her long and hard service in the “utility business” she had often to act such parts,



quite regardless of choice, and in so doing proved herself capable of that which she did later from love of her sister. She could give no prominent parts to Susan in most of the plays in which she appeared as leading lady ; but in "Romeo and Juliet" the value of their parts was equal, while she was able by her instruction and support to place her sister at her very best, and in the result her self-sacrifice had its full reward. Of the press notices perhaps none was more valuable than that written by James Sheridan Knowles, which is given below : —

"I witnessed with astonishment the *Romeo* of Miss Cushman. Unanimous and lavish as were the encomiums of the London press, I was not prepared for such a triumph of pure genius. You recollect, perhaps, Kean's third act of "Othello." Did you ever expect to see anything like it again? I never did ; and yet I saw as great a thing last Wednesday night in *Romeo's* scene with the *Friar*, after the sentence of banishment, — quite as great ! I am almost tempted to go further. It was a scene of topmost passion ; not simulated passion, — no such thing ; real, palpably real. The genuine heart-storm was on, — on in wildest fitfulness of fury ; and I listened and gazed and held my breath, while my blood ran hot and cold. I am sure it must have been the case with every one in the house ; but I was all absorbed in *Romeo*, till a thunder of applause recalled me to myself. I particularize this scene because it is the most powerful, but every scene exhibited the same truthfulness. The first scene with *Juliet*, for instance, admirably personated by her beau-

tiful sister, was exquisitely faithful ; the eye, the tone, the general bearing, — everything attesting the lover smit to the core at first sight, and shrinkingly and falteringly endeavoring, with the aid of palm and eye and tongue, to break his passion to his idol. My heart and mind are so full of this extraordinary, most extraordinary performance, that I know not where to stop or how to go on. Throughout it was a triumph equal to the proudest of those which I used to witness years ago, and for a repetition of which I have looked in vain till now. There is no trick in Miss Cushman's performance ; no thought, no interest, no feeling, seems to actuate her, except what might be looked for in *Romeo* himself, were *Romeo* reality."

Still another is valuable, because it analyzes more thoroughly her manner of "being *Romeo* :"

"The glowing reality and completeness of Miss Cushman's performance perhaps produces the strength of the impression with which she sends us away. The character, instead of being shown to us in a heap of *disjecta membra*, is exhibited by her in a powerful light which at once displays the proportions and the beauty of the poet's conception. It is as if a noble symphony, distorted and rendered unmeaning by inefficient conductors, had suddenly been performed under the hand of one who knew in what *time* the composer intended it should be taken. Yet this wonderful completeness, though it may produce upon the public the effect of all high art, that of concealing the means by which it is obtained, ought not to render the critic unmindful of Miss Cushman's labors in detail. These should be

pointed out, not to diminish, but on the contrary to increase by explaining, her triumph; for had her superb conception not been seconded by the utmost exactitude of execution, the effect would have failed. Of this, however, there was no lack, nor is it for us to estimate the pains of a process by which so finished a work was achieved. It is for us merely to record that no symptoms of carelessness or haste appeared, no sentiment was slurred over or half comprehended, no passage slighted as of small importance. The intensity with which the actress has seized the character is grounded upon too reverent an appreciation of its creator's genius to allow her to sit in judgment on the means he has chosen for the accomplishment of his own purpose. The restoration of the plot and text of Shakespeare (thankfully as we receive it) is only a part of this demonstration of the honor in which he is held by the most admirable of his modern illustrators. It breathes through every line of the performance.

“All Miss Cushman's stage business is founded upon intellectual ideas, and not upon conventionalisms; but it is also most effective in a theatrical light. Her walk and attitudes are graceful; the manner in which the courtesy of the stage is given is very high-bred; her fencing is better than skilful, because it is appropriate. *Tybalt* is struck dead, as lightning strikes the pine; one blow beats down his guard, and one lunge closes the fray; indignation has for a moment the soul of *Romeo*. With *Paris* there is more display of swordsmanship; he falls by the hand of the lover, when ‘as fixed, but far too tranquil for despair’; and the gestures,

eloquent as words, in the Garden scene, and the piteous lingering over the body of *Juliet*, are portions of the performance which are not likely to pass away from the memory of the spectator, who was compelled in the former to share the lover's enthusiasm, in the latter his agony."

After this successful winter in London (1846) the sisters fulfilled a six weeks' engagement in Dublin, and finished the season with a few nights in provincial towns.

CHAPTER V.

1847-1849.

IN the spring of 1847 the sisters made a provincial tour, and again acted six weeks in Dublin, where Miss Cushman was always a favorite. She found something that especially appealed to her in the genuine Irish impulsiveness, and was able quickly to kindle a responsive sympathy in Irish audiences. She enjoyed the wit of this people, and had a fund of amusing anecdote of her experiences among them, with which she not infrequently entertained her friends in private — for she told stories well, and loved to tell them; and sometimes, for the select few, she added Irish songs, among which Lover's "Father Molloy" was a great favorite.

After Dublin, Miss Cushman and her sister acted in many of the principal towns throughout Great Britain, and finally at Liverpool, where they visited Seaforth Hall, the home of Mr. James Muspratt, whose son Miss Susan Cushman (or Mrs. Merriman) married on March 9, 1848.

Of this provincial tour I shall give no *critiques*, since they would be but a repetition of those of the London press. Miss Cushman won hosts of admirers among the general public, and many warm friends among those whom she met in private.

Before her sister's marriage they visited Paris, and Miss Cushman there became acquainted with Henry F. Chorley, Mrs. Hemans's biographer, and the musical critic of the *Athenæum*. He began very soon to talk and write to her of his play, "The Duchess Elinor," in which Miss Cushman took the principal character, but not until six or seven years later. It will be spoken of in its proper place ; I refer to it here because it is so good an illustration of the continuance in a persistent struggle which is so often necessary before an author can attain a public hearing. It also shows the faithfulness of Miss Cushman's friendship, for she ever held herself ready to do her best for Mr. Chorley's heroine.

It is not inappropriate to give here one of the many notices which appeared on the occasion of Miss Susan Cushman's marriage. The following is from the *Theatrical Journal* :—

"In the United States, where Miss Susan Cushman passed the first six years of her professional life, she was well known as an artist of taste and judgment, and a highly accomplished woman. Her first appearance was at the Park Theatre, New York, in April, 1837, as *Laura Castelli*, in Mr. Epes Sargent's play, 'The Genoese : ' and so immediate was her success, that she was on the fourth night cast for *Desdemona*, to the *Othello* of Mr. Vandenhoff, who was then starring in America. From New York she went to Philadelphia and played for some time with Mr. Ranger, now of the Haymarket Theatre, London. During her brief career she successively played the 'juvenile tragedy' and 'genteel comedy' business, as it is theatrically termed, to Mr.

James Wallack, Mr. Forrest, and Mr. Macready ; and was the representative, in Philadelphia and New York, of the principal female parts of most of our recent dramas, — *Grace Harkaway* to her sister's *Lady Gay Spanker*, *Pauline* in the 'Lady of Lyons,' *Florentine* in 'Time Works Wonders,' *Julie de Mortemar*, *Lady Alice Hawthorn*, and *Satan in Paris!* The last of these characters had a remarkable triumph, and was played by her for many successive nights.

"In the 'Happy Man,' and in most of poor Power's best pieces, that delightful comedian has often declared that he never had a more clever supporter than Miss Cushman, who displayed a racy humor and a love of fun seldom looked for among the *Juliets* and *Desdemonas* of the stage. The former character was not one of this lady's American parts [?], but since her arrival in England she has actually performed that one character of *Juliet* upwards of *two hundred nights*."

The editor of the *Sun* paid her a delicate compliment when he said that she was "the most lady-like representative of the most lady-like character that Shakespeare ever drew."

During the year 1848 Miss Charlotte Cushman did not act as constantly as she had done before this time. She made several excursions to different parts of England, and appeared as *Queen Katherine* on the occasion of a benefit of Mr. Macready's at the Drury Lane Theatre on July 10, when "Henry VIII." and the "Jealous Wife" were acted. In "Macready's Diary" we read in a foot-note, by the Editor : —

"This night's performance at Drury Lane Theatre

was given by the special command of the Queen, and for Macready's benefit on the occasion of his approaching departure for America. The Queen Dowager, the Duchesses of Kent and Cambridge, and other members of the royal family were present, together with many representatives of political life, of art, and of literature."

Macready himself wrote: "On going to the stage, indeed, as it appeared from the beginning of the anthem, an organized disturbance, similar to that got up for the expulsion of the French actors, was violently persisted in by a few persons in the pit and the galleries. My reception was very great, and the house, with her Majesty and the Prince in state, was most brilliant. The noise continued through the scene; and in the next, wishing to ascertain the nature of the disturbance, I sent to ask leave to address the audience. The Queen granted it; and I told the galleries that, understanding they were incommoded for want of room, I had to assure them that, happy as I had been in receiving favors from them for many years, they would now add to my obligations by receiving their money and leaving the theatre. Applause but not tranquillity ensued, and it was only in the Banquet scene that the play began to be heard. I took great pains, both in *Cardinal Wolsey* and in *Mr. Oakley*. The Queen left at the end of 'The Jealous Wife,' and I was called on and most warmly greeted."

This is no place to comment upon this singular behavior of the British public in the presence of her Majesty, but it must have seemed odd to Miss Cushman.

The next day Macready published a card of thanks to Miss Cushman and others who had assisted him. It was certainly a great honor for an American actress to be cast in the leading part on such an occasion ; and yet, in spite of all her triumphs, at times, all through Miss Cushman's life, she seemed to distrust herself. It was perhaps a secret of the continuous strength she showed, that she was never quite satisfied, and always anxious to exceed what might reasonably be expected of her. She always regretted the want of early systematic training, and prized the opportunity of seeing great actors. Of Rachel she wrote : " I used to look on in a perfect rapture of wonder and admiration at her unapproachable art ; and often, as I left the theatre, and compared my own acting with hers, despair took possession of me, and a mad impulse to end life and effort together."

Her reverence and love for her art can in no way be so well told as in her own words : " I think I love and revere all arts equally, only putting my own just above the others, because in it I recognize the union and culmination of all. To me it seems as if when God conceived the world, that was Poetry ; he formed it, and that was Sculpture ; he colored it, and that was Painting ; and then, crowning work of all, he peopled it with living beings, and that was the grand, divine, eternal Drama."

Having referred to Miss Cushman's admiration of Rachel, I will here quote a part of a very interesting paper, written by Madame de Marguerites, which appeared in *Sharpe's London Journal* in 1852,

entitled “Mademoiselle Rachel and Miss Cushman :” —

“It is impossible, in witnessing the performance of Charlotte Cushman, not to be reminded of Rachel ; and though in many things they are dissimilar, yet the effect of their appearance is the same, — riveting the attention and interesting the mind from the first moment they come before you. The influence of that earnest and steady glance they both possess hushes at once to silence every trivial thought ; then the deep tones, conveying a meaning in each syllable, arouse the elevated instincts of our nature ; an awe, far above that felt for earthly potentates, comes over us ; unconsciously the memory of heroic deeds, lifting us far above the dross of the wearing world, fills our soul. With eye uplifted, heart expanded, nerved to generous impulses alone, we feel, we recognize, that we are in the presence of genius, — genius that came from Heaven, but now rarely seen in a world possessed by a small, well-educated, and self-satisfied array of petty talent. . . . Both Rachel and Cushman, endowed with a strong will as well as high genius, have obtained the place they hold by long and arduous struggles. Neither possesses the one element to woman’s celebrity, — personal beauty. . . . As a whole, perhaps, Rachel and Miss Cushman would not act a play alike. They are of different countries, have different educations, different associations ; but there are touches of the same passions which, though in different dramas, are so much alike as to be almost miraculous. In vain the Atlantic divides and countries differ ; genius knows

no limits and but one language, — that of truth and inspiration.

“ There is a play in which Miss Cushman rarely appears, and perhaps for many reasons. As a whole the play is unsuited to her. This play is ‘ Love.’ . . . In the scene where the *Countess* reveals her love to *Huon*, Miss Cushman attains the very highest and most refined range of art. That our feelings are not outraged, our habitual associations shocked, — but that, on the contrary, all our sympathies are aroused, our respect and pity enlisted for this woman who o’ersteps the modesty of nature, — is owing to the thorough sweetness and truth of the actress, to the tender delicacy she infuses into this one cry of a passion long pent up in a proud and bursting heart. So in ‘ *Phèdre* ’ — the revolting character of the scene, where she reveals her passion to *Hypolitus*, is lost in the struggling feelings of latent modesty and rising remorse which Rachel infuses into the bold declaration which, almost in spite of a better nature, seems to fall from her lips.

“ *Phèdre* was a heathen heroine, and intended by Euripides and Racine to appeal to all our compassion as a victim of the vengeance of the gods ; therefore Rachel has profoundly studied tradition and history in showing the struggle between the woman and the relentless fate which hurries her on, though she has entirely swerved from stage tradition (that which has clogged and crushed so many aspirations) in not making this scene from end to end one whirlwind of passion. Here, again, Charlotte Cushman has had the same inspiration, though it assumes a different form.

Pride, the pride of woman and high birth, combine to make the tender avowal difficult. Miss Cushman's reserve of manner, — almost entire absence of gesture, — while her words are warm and gushing; the utter shame which bids her, when she ceases, bury her woman's blushes in her hands, — are all such minute yet masterly touches which render the conception of the scene one of the great proofs of her genius and her versatility. That the mind which could conceive the fierce heroism of *Meg Merrilies*, and make the audience quail beneath her wild fury, should conceive, trace, and impersonate the holiest and gentlest, yet the tenderest of woman's sentiments, is, even in the annals of the gifted, remarkable.

“ But people now-a-days go to see a play to learn the plot, to wait for one or two grand points and effects; not to follow closely each delineation of the passions before them, as all contributing and leading to the catastrophe, and testing and displaying the profound study and genius of the artist. In this has Rachel had less to contend with than the American actress. She appeals to an audience in whom, from the highest to the lowest, the dramatic taste is inherent, — an impulsive, imaginative and passionate people, ever ready to identify themselves with the drama, and capable of concentrating their attention exclusively on the characters and scenes before them. She acts, too, before an audience educated to attach importance to dramatic art as perpetuating the memory of glorious deeds, cultivating poetry and eloquence by rendering the flowers of language familiar, and rousing the better feelings of our

nature by appealing to our sensibilities, our intellect, and our hearts. She, too, plays to critics deep-learned in history, deep-skilled in metaphysical analysis, — critics who have studied art and are there to guide or restrain, critics whose art has a mission as high and distinguished as that of the artist himself. . . .

“But Charlotte Cushman, though she knows that but the louder tones of her voice will reach the masses, plays as though the whole artistic world were listening. Led on by genius, she loses sight of others’ approval, and plays as she is inspired. Both Rachel and Charlotte Cushman have left tradition far behind them, for often they have found tradition at variance with feeling and truth.

“To follow both Rachel and Charlotte Cushman through all their impersonations would be too long an indulgence. One more example of the resemblance of their instincts, and we have done. Again the example is in ‘Phèdre,’ — the dying scene as contrasted with that of *Katherine of Aragon*, in ‘Henry VIII.,’ — and the death-scene is the most impressive of both plays. *Katherine* the Queen, oppressed by persecution, worn by slow malady, the lines of age and death marked on every feature of her face, is slowly borne into our presence. Those who have stood beside the death-bed of a beloved parent, and watched the slow approach of that crisis which is forever to end all sufferings, will instantly recall that hour when they watched the expiring Queen before them. The languid head seeking the support of the pillow, the husky voice, the uneasy movements of the hands, the pale and hollow cheek, are all

true, too true, to nature. Thus Rachel in 'Phèdre,' arrested, in the full force of youth and health, by the poison which circulates in her veins, her eye already glazing, her cheek pallid, her voice all changed, with faltering step is led on to die.

"Both the Christian and the heathen Queen have done with the world ; what they have to say to those around is but a last duty in which they take no part ; but one thought at last recalls the past to both. With the holy and resigned Christian woman, whose duties and affections had united, it is the remembrance of her child which animates the worn-out frame ; a smile like a mild moon-beam once more plays over those features, and the voice, though plaintive, is yet sweet and clear ; yet 't is but for a moment, and then she returns her thoughts to heaven, her mind to eternal rest.

"So *Phèdre*, exhausted by passion, tortured by bodily pain, falters out slowly, word by word, the confession of her passion and her crime ; but as she speaks, her thoughts recur to that time when, sheltered by deep woods, she watched the swift car of *Hypolitus* flying before her admiring gaze ; then, with this passion which has been her fate, again the eye kindles, again the voice grows firm and loud, her strength returns ; and, following still her visions, with extended arm, nostrils dilated, and glance of fire, she rises from her chair. But the vision fades, the fictitious powers vanish, and she falls exhausted back to her place, in agony and despair, to give to the infernal gods her unquiet spirit.

"How like, and yet how different, is the same thought

which, moulded to the fashion of the character and circumstance, inspired both these women of genius ! Time will scarcely mar any of the qualities of either of these great actresses. Europe has not tired of Rachel, and both America and Europe are always ready to welcome Miss Cushman ; but when years and years are gone by, they will still be remembered, because the impression, on seeing both, is like an event of one's life ; and as such will be related by the old to the younger, and thus their genius will live forever."

We may infer that Miss Cushman had doubted the wisdom of her acting *Queen Katherine*, from a note written to her by Chorley in October of the previous year (1847). He said : —

" Had I not found your note on coming home from the theatre, I *must* have written to you after the *Queen Katherine*, which I went to see quietly. You are wholly wrong *to fancy that the part does not do you good, and you good to the part*. What will you say when I tell you that it has given me a higher idea of your power than any I have yet seen you act ? I like it all, — conception, execution, everything. I like the plainness, the simplicity, and the utter absence of all strain or solemnity.

" You know I am difficult, and little given to praising any one. Most of all was I delighted to hear how your level voice, when not forced, tells, and tells thoroughly. Now believe I don't say this to put you in good humor, or for any other reason than because it is honest and *must* come !

" As for the critics, remember that from time imme-

morial they have been always, at first, unjust to new and natural readings. The *house* shows how little harm or good they do, and of *its* humor there was no doubt; though people who have been wiping their eyes on apricot-colored bonnet-strings, as I saw one young lady of nature doing, can't find time or coolness to applaud anything as they ought. In short, I was pleased, *much* pleased, and shall tell you yet more about the same when I see you; and I am truly glad for your own sake that you have played the part."

About a year later, in August, 1849, Miss Cushman sailed for the United States.

CHAPTER VI.

1849-1852.

MISS CUSHMAN was heartily welcomed on her return to America. Her personal friends were proud of the way in which her noble and lovable character had been developed, and the public were proud that one of our countrywomen could thus command the admiration and praise of the British people and the British press, — a woman, too, whose whole education and dramatic experience had been acquired in America.

Her reappearance was made in the character of *Mrs. Haller*, on Oct. 8, 1849, at the Broadway Theatre, New York, under the management of Mr. E. A. Marshall. Mr. Charles Walter Couldock* had come from England to support Miss Cushman, and made his first appearance in this country as *The Stranger*.

Miss Cushman was enthusiastically received, and throughout this engagement, which lasted until October 27, she had large and appreciative houses. Her duties were not light, for in those few nights she acted *Rosalind*, *Lady Macbeth*, *Mariana*, *Julia*, *Queen*

* C. W. Couldock was born in London, April 26, 1815. He became an actor when twenty years old. He was the original *Abel Murcott*, in "Our American Cousin," at Laura Keane's Theatre in 1858. He has made a good American reputation, and is an excellent serious actor.

Katherine, Juliana, Beatrice, Mrs. Simpson, and Meg Merrilies. This last personation, which was so essentially the creation of Miss Cushman's genius, was everywhere very popular, and it is a matter of interest now to read and compare the testimony of various writers and critics concerning it.

William Winter says of it : —

“As an actress Miss Cushman was best in tragedy, whether lurid or pathetic, and in sombre melodrama. Theatrical history will probably associate her name more intimately with *Meg Merrilies* than with any other character. This production was unique. It embodied physical misery, wandering reason, delirious imagination, and the wasted tenderness of a loving, broken heart ; and it was tinted with the most graphic colors of romance. The art-method by which it was projected was peculiar in this, — that it disregarded probability, and addressed itself to the imaginative perception. When *Meg Merrilies* sprang forth in the moonlight, and stood, with towering figure and extended arms, tense, rigid, and terribly beautiful, glaring on the form of *Harry Bertram*, the spectator saw a creature of the ideal world and not of earth. This conception may have been in the brain of Sir Walter Scott ; it was never on his page. Miss Cushman could give free rein to her frenzy in this character, and that was why she loved it and excelled in it, and was able by means of it to reveal herself so amply and distinctly to the public mind. What she thus revealed was a power of passionate emotion as swift as the lightning and as wild as the gale, — an individuality

fraught with pathos, romance, tenderness, grandeur, the deep knowledge of grief, and the royal strength of endurance. Her *Meg Merrilies* was not her greatest work, but it was her most startling and effective one, because it was the most sudden and brilliant illumination of her being."

Henry Morley, the English author, and editor of the *London Examiner*, wrote : —

"Miss Cushman's melodramatic *Meg Merrilies* has quite as indisputably the attributes of genius about it as any piece of poetry or tragedy could have. Such is her power over the intention and feeling of the part that the mere words of it become a secondary matter. It is the figure, the gait, the look, the tone, by which she puts beauty and passion into language the most indifferent. When these mere artifices are continued through a series of scenes, a certain strain becomes apparent, and the effect is not wholly agreeable. Nevertheless it is something to see what the unassisted resources of acting may achieve with the mere idea of a fine part, stripped of fine language, unclothed, as it were, in words. The human tenderness blending with that Eastern picturesqueness of gesture, the fine sentiment breaking out from beneath that heavy feebleness and clumsiness of old age, are wonderfully startling."

From Mr. H. D. Stone's "Personal Recollections of the Drama" we quote : —

"But the *Meg Merrilies* of Miss Cushman is the most positively electrical and *fearfully* grand of all her inimitable personations. Miss Cushman has made *Meg Merrilies* a specialty, — in fact, wholly, exclusively her

own, and has no rival in it on either the American or British boards. Those who have once witnessed her in the 'Old Witch' will have little desire to see any other person, however eminent that person may be, in that peculiar rôle. It would seem as though, when he wrote 'Guy Mannering,' Sir Walter Scott must have had Charlotte Cushman in his mind's eye as the proper representative of old *Meg*."

From Laurence Hutton's "Plays and Players:" —

"As *Nancy Sikes* she made her first great hit; as *Meg Merrilies*, perhaps, she has appeared to greatest advantage, and in this part will she be most fondly remembered."

Miss Jewsbury, the novelist, who was a friend of Miss Cushman, thus speaks of one of her visits to Manchester, and of her acting of *Meg Merrilies*: —

"In Manchester she made many friends, quiet, domestic people, who regarded her with affection and respect. She was noble and generous, and gave help to whoever needed it to the utmost of her ability. As she said once of herself, 'she tried always to keep her prow turned towards good,' and I feel sure that this desire underlay the whole of her life.

" . . . Of her acting in some of her characters I retain a vivid recollection. Her *Meg Merrilies*, and that strange, silent spring to the middle of the stage, which was her entrance on it, can never be forgotten; nor the tones of her voice, which seemed to come from another world. Madame Vestris said that '*Meg Merrilies* made her turn cold.' The song she crooned in the part was exactly as *Meg* would have given it, and sug-

gested no other person and no acting. Indeed, all her characters were singularly true and individual. She never seemed to display herself in her acting."

The costume which Miss Cushman wore in *Meg Merrilies*, and her whole make-up, was as much her own as her rendering of the character. It seemed to be an unmeaning and incongruous collection of strange parts, never intended to form a whole ; but when, by the fitly joining together which Miss Cushman effected (by some means unknown to any one but herself), it appeared in its entirety, it was full of subtle meaning. It told of all the old gypsy had endured, — the wind and storm, the cold and hardship ; all were symbolized in that remarkable dress with its dilapidated head-gear. And yet, poor as it was, there was something in that head-dress, or in the way it was worn, that suggested a supernatural force, a genuine, untamed queenliness.

The stick used by Miss Cushman was not "a goodly sloe-thorn cudgel," but a "property," and provided for each engagement when required ; there was therefore an opportunity afforded for the gratification of curiosity-collectors. Frequently Miss Cushman was asked to give the stick she had used to some admirer, and it would not be strange if many of those relics still hold a place of honor in various collections throughout the land. The one she last carried in New York is at Villa Cushman, her late home at Newport.

On Dec. 24, 1849, Miss Cushman again appeared at the Broadway Theatre, New York, as *Fulia*, in the "Hunchback." On Jan. 5, 1850, she acted *Bianca*, in "Fazio," the character in which she had made her

début in London, and it was as enthusiastically received in New York as in the former city. Her personation of frenzied jealousy was remarkable for its power, while her touching and subdued misery, as well as her self-accusation at the end of the Trial scene, were equally worthy of admiration. In the scene where *Fazio* is led away she touched the very topmost limit of her power. When the fatal bell first sounded she stood rigid, fixed in form and gaze, unconsciously peering into vacancy. Even when *Fazio* spoke tenderly to her she was not roused. The bell tolled again and again ; she heard it not, and he was led away. At last the sound reached her ear ; for one swift moment she looked around, and in that flash of thought understood all that had happened ; and before another moment could add its misery she fell like some helpless creature o'ertaken by the lightning-shaft. Her fall was indescribable ; it told fully of the utter wreck and ruin of her all. Her exit was another miracle of acting ; no one can say how she moved. She did not walk, nor creep, nor drag herself along ; she seemed to go without motive-power ; and as she passed from sight the spectator felt as though an invisible hand had drawn her out into a gulf of deep despair.

During the winter of 1850 she made a long and successful Southern tour, and acted at New Orleans, Savannah, Charleston, Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, — everywhere to crowded houses, which were enthusiastic in their appreciation of her powers.

This year (1850) was a very busy one. On May 13 she acted *Romeo* at the Astor Place Opera House,

New York, with Miss Fanny Wallack as *Juliet*, and Mr. Couldock as *Mercutio*. In writing of her assumption of male characters, Mr. Hutton, in "Plays and Players," says : —

"*Romeo*, *Claude Melnotte*, *Cardinal Wolsey*, and *Hamlet* are among the most prominent of the male parts she has played. Her *Cardinal Wolsey*, in which she did not appear until 1858, was a most remarkable performance. She is no doubt the only woman who has had the courage and the ability to undertake it. Another marvellous assumption of hers was *Romeo*. She was earnest, intense, and natural. The constitutional susceptibility of *Romeo's* character was depicted by her in its boldest relief, — a particular phase of the nature of the young Montague, which no male actor, unless he were a mere youth, could efficiently and satisfactorily portray.

"In the 'Lady of Lyons' she has played the *Widow Melnotte* (she was the original *Widow Melnotte* in New York), *Pauline*, and *Claude*. She acquired high repute for her *Claude* in England, and drew crowded houses at the Old Broadway, in 1850, where she first assumed it. The public seemed greatly to relish the earnest and truthful manner in which she rendered the familiar and celebrated character. It was said, over twenty-five years ago, that while women ordinarily fail when they assume male parts, Miss Cushman always succeeds."

The following anecdote illustrates Miss Cushman's decision and nerve. At the National Theatre, Boston, during the season of 1851-52, as she was playing *Romeo* to the *Juliet* of Miss Anderton, in the midst of

one of the most romantic passages between the lovers, some person in the house sneezed in such a manner as to attract the attention of the whole audience, and every one knew that the sneeze was artificial and derisive. Miss Cushman instantly stopped the dialogue, and led Miss Anderton off the stage, as a cavalier might lead a lady from the place where an insult had been offered her. She then returned to the footlights and said in a clear, firm voice, "Some man must put that person out, or I shall be obliged to do it myself." The fellow was taken away ; the audience rose *en masse* and gave three cheers for Miss Cushman, who recalled her companion and proceeded with the play as if nothing had happened.

On the 10th of June she acted *Meg Merrilies* at Niblo's Garden, New York, and then took six weeks from her engagements to go to England to see a friend who was seriously ill. On the morning of August 30 she arrived again in New York, and the same evening appeared at Niblo's as *Meg Merrilies*, closing the season the following night as *Mrs. Haller*. In October she filled another engagement at the Broadway Theatre, ending on the 26th. After an arduous winter and spring, during which she acted in several cities, she took a benefit at the Broadway Theatre in June, 1851, and on that occasion acted *Queen Katherine* and *Lady Gay Spanker*.

I give here an anecdote which was related to me by one of the actors who saw the occurrence : —

At a rehearsal for "Guy Mannering" one morning Miss Cushman was much disturbed by the singers in a concerted piece failing in the time. She appealed to

the leader of the orchestra, who was playing a violin, and asked that he should use his *bâton*. Again the piece was rehearsed and again failed ; a second time she insisted that Mr. ——— should relinquish his violin and beat the time clear through ; a third time the singing went on and with little improvement. Just as it was ended Miss Cushman saw that the leader was again busy with his bow. Then she walked down to the footlights, reached over and took the offending violin and bow into her own possession, and marched up and down the stage using it herself. The piece was rehearsed again ; the *bâton* was kept to its work, and so was the fiddle in Miss Cushman's hands, though we cannot say that she played a tune ; and this time all went well.

In the spring of 1852 Miss Cushman announced her determination to retire from the stage. She took leave of the Boston public in March, and appeared for her last engagement, at the Broadway in New York, in May, acting *Meg Merrilies* on her last night.

The frequent repetition of Miss Cushman's farewells to the stage has been the occasion of much humorous remark and some censure. Mr. Winter spoke of this as follows, at the time of her death : —

“It is not difficult to understand (when we consider that Miss Cushman was a woman of weird genius, sombre imagination, great sensibility, and celibate condition ; that she had been victorious by force rather than by sweetness ; that for her conscientious mind and highly nervous organization the practice of the dramatic art was terribly earnest, and that frequently she was the victim of disease) in what way she often came

to believe that the limit of her labor was reached, that the end of her life was near, and that her retirement from the public view was needful. With natures that see widely and feel deeply, such despondent views of personal destiny and worldly affairs are not unusual. Thackeray, long before he wrote 'The Newcomes,' said of himself that his work was done and he would accomplish no more. In the several farewells that she took of the stage Miss Cushman acted like a woman, and precisely like the woman that she was; and the censors who have misjudged her upon this point have done so, we think, through failing to consider the probable effect on conduct of that element of feminine weakness — that unsatisfied and therefore forlorn tenderness of woman's heart — which was the core of her rugged and stalwart nature. All of her adieus were sincere. None of them until now was final or possible. Let us bring to the coffin of this great genius, dead and at rest after such trials and such anguish, not only the gentleness of charitable judgment, but the justice of intelligent appreciation."

This seems fully and justly to account for what, under other circumstances and in another person, would furnish ground for severity of judgment.

CHAPTER VII.

1852-1860.

MISS CUSHMAN passed the summer and early autumn of 1852 at Liverpool with Mrs. Muspratt, made a visit to the Isle of Wight, and in October went to Rome with a party of friends, including Miss Harriet Hosmer and Mrs. Lippincott ("Grace Greenwood"). She had an agreeable winter, and in the spring, after visiting Naples, Leghorn, and Florence, returned by way of the Italian lakes, Switzerland, and Paris, to England. She then passed some time at Great Malvern, to which place she often went for rest and to profit by the water-treatment.

In December, 1853, she again acted in Liverpool, and during the next three months, in London. It was in March, 1854, that Chorley's "Duchess Elinor" was brought out at the Haymarket Theatre. Mr. Vandenhoff, who was then acting there, had a part in the play. He says, in his "Note-Book," that it had great literary merit, and that Miss Cushman thought her part in it a fine one, and had counted on it for a new success. The piece was *endured* the first night; but on the second a volley of hisses, in the fifth act, ended the matter, and consigned it to oblivion.

In April she appeared again in Liverpool, and in May in London, Birmingham, and Sheffield. In June she went to Paris, but was recalled to England on account of the illness and death of her little niece, Ida Muspratt.

The summer was passed in her usual manner when in Great Britain, and in September she was again upon the stage, opening her season in Dublin, and appearing in many provincial cities. In December of this year I find the first mention of Miss Cushman as a reader. It was upon the occasion of her dining with the Duke of Devonshire at Brighton, when she read "Henry VIII." to the Duke and his guests.

In January, 1855, Miss Cushman established herself in a house in London, where she received many friends, and assumed that social position which her character and genius had won for her and entitled her to hold.

Miss Cushman had a quick and ready sympathy with whatever was going on around her. This attribute fitted her to be a friend to people of all ages and positions. She was passionately fond of children, and very rich in the power to amuse and entertain them. She called herself the "big mamma" of the children of her own family, and never considered anything that it was in her power to do for them as a waste of time or trouble, — no, nor even a task, if only they were happy. She was always keenly interested in those about to begin the real work of life, and the sympathy and kindness which she manifested towards young people placed them at ease with her. She drew them out, and had the tact to make them say the best that was in them; and she was much in the

habit of generously aiding them to make a beginning in study and preparation for their chosen path in life. .

With people of her own age she was always welcome and greatly beloved. There was no *apparent* self-assertion about her, and yet by some subtle quality — seemingly a part of herself and not a cultivated characteristic — she exercised a sort of spell upon a number of individuals as easily as upon one, and in whatever company she found herself she was emphatically *the person* present. This may have arisen in part from the peculiarity of her manner, which was certainly always more or less dramatic, and at times purely tragic. It was especially noticeable when she met a friend ; she seemed to make a sort of stage entrance ; then, as she was interested in the conversation, she became more simple and natural, and in all cases, when she wished to please, she succeeded perfectly.

Her power to attract the admiration and to gain the affection of women was remarkable. One lady has told me of the wonderful impression which Miss Cushman produced upon her at their first meeting. She said : “ Dearly as I loved my mother and my home, if Miss Cushman had asked me that day to go with her and be her slave, without even going back to say farewell to my friends, I should have consented. I would have given my life for her ; and though I did not realize it, I was in such a state of excitement that, after leaving her, I burst into tears the moment another person addressed me, and, so to speak, broke the spell under which she had laid me.” The lady added that it was not until years had passed, and she had known Miss Cushman

very well, and life had brought many other associations and cares to her, that she could resist this peculiar influence whenever she met the great actress.

In this connection I quote from an article which appeared in the *Boston Advertiser* shortly after Miss Cushman's death : —

“Miss Cushman possessed in a remarkable degree the power of attaching women to her. They loved her with utter devotion, and she repaid their love with the wealth of her great warm heart. Young girls gave her genuine hero-worship, which she received with a gracious kindness, that neither encouraged the worship nor wounded the worshipper ; mature women loved and trusted her to the last hour of her life. She had the perfect service of the purest friendship ; and beyond that, numbers of noble women waiting to give and receive unfailing sympathy and affection. Miss Cushman's triumphs have been great, but the greatest of these was the character that won such friends.”

She had also that capacity, so valuable in a hostess, of perceiving all that was occurring, and keeping herself *au courant* with several things at the same moment. I may illustrate this by saying that upon one occasion, when she was holding an important conversation with a gentleman who related the circumstance to me, a little girl, who was a great favorite with her, was playing a game at a table in the room with another child. Miss Cushman was interested to have her pet win ; and while she gave intelligent and thoughtful attention to the conversation, she at the same time followed the game so closely as to advise and caution the child

from time to time, and guide her skilfully through it ; and yet the gentleman never felt for a moment that she was diverted from the matter of which they spoke. It is easy to understand how such a capacity must have aided her in accomplishing the vast amount of varied work which she did.

There was a sense of repose about her, in the discussion of important matters, which was most agreeable to others. The gentleman above spoken of said : " To me she was the most reposeful woman that I ever knew. When one had conversed with her he felt that everything had been said ; not only that she, but that the person with whom she talked, had said all that belonged to the subject and the occasion." Considering such traits, it is easy to comprehend the devotion she received from her intimate associates, and the admiration she commanded in all who knew her.

Her personal appearance and want of beauty has been frequently commented on, but when once in her presence this was forgotten. Certainly she lacked beauty of feature, and what is commonly termed gracefulness ; but her presence was at once genial and stately, and one soon forgot the form, and thought only of the expression of her face, which was ever changing, and depended much upon the effect of her eyes, which were remarkably fine.

Many pictures have been made of Miss Cushman. At one time, in London, five different artists were painting portraits of her ; but no likeness could ever represent her satisfactorily, since it was the flexibility of her features, and the picturing of every passing emotion

upon them, that made the face by which her friends and the public knew her. Thus it has resulted that portraits of her appear to be either sweet and weak or strong and hard, exaggerating always one or the other of her two most prominent characteristics, — tenderness and strength.

To return to her life in London. She gave musical parties there which were very enjoyable ; and, on one occasion, when she entertained Ristori at dinner, paid her a very pretty compliment by having the whole affair as nearly like a dinner in Italy as possible, and wearing the Italian colors, red, green, and white, in her own dress.

With all her private interests she continued her professional labors. In February, 1855, she again appeared in the provinces, and during that winter and spring she did an immense amount of work, ending her season in July. During the summer she visited the English lakes, and on October 1 acted at Newcastle, later at Sunderland, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and so on, returning to London for a month at the Haymarket, and then going again to Sheffield, Wolverhampton, and Bristol.

How few who look on the results of such a life appreciate all the labor that is required to produce them. At times Miss Cushman broke down and suffered in health and spirits. Her friends became anxious about her, and from such expressions as the following, quoted from one of Miss Jewsbury's letters, we can understand exactly what the reaction must have been when she had overtaxed even her great powers of endurance : —



“MY DEAREST CHILD, — You are in a bad way just now, and no wonder ; you have had enough to drive to distraction a whole regiment of *men*, let alone women. But don’t distress yourself too much in your own heart ; your depression and discouragement, your weariness and vexation of spirit, are in a great measure the result of all the superhuman exertions you have had to go through for the last few months. Living in London society does, under any circumstances, make one exquisitely sad, and you have had its essence, doubly and trebly distilled and powerful. . . . The life you have led, the success, the acclamations, the perfect glare of triumph in which you have moved for the last few months, are almost fabulous. No nervous system that was ever born of woman could stand it ; you are a perfect miracle in my eyes, but you are proving your mortality by suffering.”

In January, 1856, she began another arduous year, so much like the preceding that no account need be given of it until the autumn, when she went again to Rome ; and, though always busy, she did not act for some months.

In September, 1857, she came to America, where she made her reappearance at Burton’s New Theatre, New York, on the 28th of that month, as *Bianca*. During October she commenced a second engagement at this house, and on the 13th of November she acted *Cardinal Wolsey* ; she gave a masterly impersonation of the character, and added new laurels to the many she had won before.

She remained in her own country about nine months,

acting in many cities, and again took leave of the public at Niblo's Garden, New York, in an engagement commencing with "Henry VIII.," on June 21, 1858. She was supported by E. L. Davenport, John Gilbert, L. R. Shewell, Mrs. Abbott, Miss Ida Vernon, etc. During this engagement she acted *Romeo* to the *Juliet* of Miss Mary Devlin, who then made her New York début.* Miss Cushman and Miss Devlin also appeared as *Lady Gay Spanker* and *Grace*, in "London Assurance," with Henry Placide, Brougham, and Blake as *Sir Harcourt Courtly*, *Dazzle*, and *Meddle*.

Night after night the bills announced the final appearance of Miss Cushman, and still she stayed on. This was daily repeated from the 2d to the 7th of July, when she played *Lady Macbeth* and sailed almost immediately thereafter.

What has been said of Miss Cushman's manner in private was true of her upon the stage; that is, that at first, before she lost herself in her assumed character, and indeed always in the minor scenes, she was what is termed "stagy." She employed the angular motion, the stride, the start, the labored breathing, and the stilted declamation which are happily almost obsolete now. This manner was especially noticeable in "*Macbeth*," and in the first scene with *Macbeth* Miss Cushman gave full illustration of these peculiarities; but as the play progressed, and she became in truth *Lady Macbeth*, all this staginess disappeared, and she seemed to have forgotten herself; she was acting no longer.

* This lady was married to Mr. Edwin Booth in July, 1860, and died in February, 1863.

She coaxed and chided by turns ; was now the queen, again the loving wife, and then the suffering, conscience-stricken woman, with all the naturalness possible. Of course there are differences of opinion upon Miss Cushman's playing, as upon everything else in the world, and I shall give both sides of the question here. Mr. Murdock says in "The Stage : " —

"Miss Cushman's style of acting, while it lacked imagination, possessed in a remarkable degree the elements of force. She grasped the intellectual body of the poet's conception without mastering its more subtle spirit ; she caught the facts of a character, but its conceits were beyond her reach. Her understanding was never at fault ; it was keen and penetrating, but that glow of feeling which springs from the centre of emotional elements was not a prominent constituent of her organization. She was intensely prosaic, definitely practical ; and hence her perfect identity with what may be termed the materialism of *Lady Macbeth*, and the still more fierce personality of that dramatic nondescript, *Meg Merrilies*, neither of which characters was of 'imagination all compact,' but rather of imperious wilfulness."

Mr. Vandenhoff writes in his "Note Book : " —

"I never admired her *Lady Macbeth*. It is too animal ; it wants intellectual confidence and relies too much on physical energy. Besides, she bullies *Macbeth*, gets him into a corner of a stage, and — as I heard a man with more force than elegance express it — she 'pitches into him.' In fact, as one sees her large, clenched hand and muscular arm threatening him, in

alarming proximity, one feels that if other arguments fail with her husband, she will have recourse to blows."

We have seen how, in this very character, she interested Macready the first night that she played with him; also how, on the occasion of his farewell, when he acted before the Queen, he chose Miss Cushman to support him. All this is the highest praise he could have given her.

John D. Stockton in *Scribner's Monthly Magazine* for June, 1876, says:—

"As a tragic actress Charlotte Cushman held an unsurpassed position. Of her greatness in her own art there is no question. Shakespeare in our day has had no grander exponent than she. . . . She frequently rose to the level of the Shakespearian mind, was kindled with the Shakespearian fire, so that in her inspired moments she realized the character. It was not always thus, for the greatest of actors can only effect by supreme effort that which Shakespeare did with apparently unconscious ease. But it is enough glory for an actress when she can cause her auditors to forget, even if only for a moment, the difference between the *Lady Macbeth* of the stage and the *Lady Macbeth* of the book; that she, too, has something of the magic which deludes men to delight, and is able to re-create with no unworthy hand creations which are unrivalled in imagination. . . . All the elements of Miss Cushman's artistic nature were large, and were cast in heroic mould. The grand characteristic of her genius seemed to be the rare union and perfect balance of her passion and intellect. The deep emotional powers are frequently lost upon the

stage, because of the want of adequate intellectual direction ; but the tremendous strength of Charlotte Cushman was controlled by the laws of intellectual beauty and truth. Even in the terrific outbursts of *Meg Merrilies*, the agonized madness of *Bianca*, or the remorse of *Lady Macbeth*, she never ranted nor overstepped the modesty of nature. Passion is like fire, a good servant but a dangerous master, and with her it was kept within the bounds of the purest art. This gave to her acting the charm of reserved power ; it did not convey the impression of labor and effort, but one of natural inspiration and ease."

One more quotation from Mr. H. A. Clapp in the *Boston Advertiser*, May, 1875, when she last appeared as *Lady Macbeth* : —

"Miss Cushman at once compels the closest attention and the strongest interest of the spectator ; and long before the tragedy is concluded she has accomplished the wonderful feat of gaining for herself the warmest sympathy. In the scenes of the first and second acts, in which *Lady Macbeth* figures, no one with a mind any less excessively subtle than Mr. Weiss's could discover, we think, that love and not ambition is the main motive of the woman's character ; but further on, when the dread judgment of crime has overtaken the royal criminals, Miss Cushman represents the womanly nature of *Lady Macbeth* as succumbing in anguish before her own conscience, while her whole heart is turned in tender compassion to the suffering of her husband.

"During the Banquet scene *Lady Macbeth* is shown as regal in dignity, and shrewd, self-possessed, and ready

in explaining the *King's* emotion, trying to chide him into courage, and dismissing the company of dangerous witnesses ; but upon the departure of the guests she has only broken words expressive of the deepest affection for her husband, and at the close of the interview, by groans and gestures and looks, she shows how all her *inward* courage has disappeared, — that she can yet encounter the world, but hides her face from God, and conscience, His avenger.

“Miss Cushman now carried out this idea — which, of course, is not new — with absolute boldness and sharpness ; it is consistent with the rest of her conception, is highly effective in itself, and correctly represents one justifiable view of Shakespeare's purpose. To such a nature the Sleep-walking scene comes with the effect of a dramatic climax, but inevitably. *Lady Macbeth's* soul *must* confess the horror of its remorse ; she would die a hundred several deaths before making a sign to the world ; but in sleep her will is powerless, and her dread Judge sentences her to be forever re-enacting her crime. Miss Cushman's whole interpretation deserves the careful study, as it will compel the admiration, of all persons of judgment and culture.”

A fact of great interest in connection with this personation has been told me by Mr. Lawrence Barrett. It is that Miss Cushman maintained that, all through the more important scenes of the play, both *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth* were under the influence of wine. She supported her opinion from the text, and believed that Shakespeare supposed it to be apparent that they were drunk. This suits well with the manner which Miss

Cushman had at some points in the play, a reckless, swinging way of doing everything and an apparent carelessness of what happened. When the play is read with this theory in mind, it is easy to find many things that suit it well.

Miss Cushman passed a portion of the summer of 1858 at Malvern, went to various points of interest in Great Britain, and in October turned her face towards Rome, visiting many other places *en route*. Arrived at Rome she occupied herself in fitting up her home in Via Gregoriana, known to so many of her countrymen and women. It was most advantageously placed, and there she lived what, to a person of her age and tastes, must have been as nearly an ideal life as is often enjoyed in this world. Her fame was world-wide; her superiority in the profession she had chosen was fully acknowledged; all doors were open to her; indeed, people of rank, in literature and art as well as by birth, sought her acquaintance, and she was able to do many kindnesses for others, a privilege she always craved and improved.

This first winter in the Roman home was followed by a sad springtime, for in April news came to her of Mrs. Muspratt's illness. She hastened to Liverpool and arrived before the death of her sister, which occurred on the 10th of May, 1859. When we consider what the tie had been between these two sisters, and how Miss Cushman had been to her sister a support and friend, almost a second mother, we can easily understand the void she must have found in her life when that sister was taken out of it.

After spending the summer in Wales she returned to Rome. The winter of 1859-60 was a quiet one. It was then that her friend, Miss Stebbins, made a portrait bust of her. The original belongs to the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston ; several copies exist in different places in America, and one is at Seaforth Hall, Liverpool.

CHAPTER VIII.

1860-1870.

ON the 9th of June, 1860, Miss Cushman again sailed for America, and in the following autumn devoted herself to her profession. She commenced an engagement of forty-eight nights at Winter Garden, New York, October 1. The first night she appeared as *Mrs. Haller*, with John Dyott as *The Stranger*. During the engagement she acted *Bianca*, with Ada Clifton as *Aldabella* and Dyott as *Fazio*; *Meg Merrilies*, with Mrs. Chanfrau as *Lucy*, Couldock as *Dandie*, and Davidge as *Dominie Sampson*; *Romeo* to the *Juliet* of Mrs. D. P. Bowers; and *Cardinal Wolsey* in "Henry VIII.," with Mrs. Duffield as *Queen Katherine*. It was a very brilliant season, and in February and March, 1861, she fulfilled another engagement at the same theatre. She then acted *Nancy Sikes* for the first time in New York for many years, with the following strong cast: Mrs. George Stoddart as *Oliver*, J. W. Wallack, Jr., as *Fagin*, J. B. Studley as *Bill Sikes*, Davidge as *Bumble*, and Owen Marlowe as *Fang*. Later she appeared as *Katherine* to Wallack's *Petruchio*.

On the 21st of March she acted at the Academy of Music, New York, for the benefit of the American

Dramatic Fund. It is said that the cast of "Macbeth" on that evening was the strongest which had been known in that tragedy in a generation. It was as follows : —

Macbeth	Edwin Booth.
Duncan	C. Kemble Mason.
Malcolm	O. B. Collins.
Banquo	A. W. Fenno.
Macduff } Noblemen of Scotland {	Charles Fisher.
Lenox } {	T. Weymiss.
Rosse } {	T. Hamblin, Jr.
Bleeding Officer	Felix Rogers.
First Murderer	J. C. Williamson.
Lady Macbeth	Miss Cushman.
Principal Singing Witch	Mme. Anna Bishop.
First Witch	Harry Pearson.
Second Witch	John Sefton.
Third Witch	James Lingard.

The whole occasion was a memorable one, and the receipts, thirty-one hundred dollars, were one third larger than those of previous benefits.

A wedding in Miss Cushman's family took her to St. Louis at this time, and she was greatly interested in what she heard there, and in other Southwestern cities, concerning the war, just then beginning. She made her final appearance that season at New Haven, and sailed for England in July.

After hearing of the first battle of Bull Run, she thus writes on August 8 : —

"The news brought by the last steamer has made me so sad and so heart-sick that I hardly know how to talk or write about it, further than this, that I believe

in God's goodness, and that even this must work together for good. . . . But I am sorry not to be at home to see the matter through. God help the weak and prosper the right, and send the wrong-doer the punishment he deserves. I do think the South comes rightfully by this success, on the principle that the Devil helps his own at first. Let those laugh who win. It was natural that all this playing at soldiers should result in a shameful defeat ; but we shall see what will be the end."

After a summer in her usual resorts, she left early in the autumn for Rome ; and there is nothing of unusual interest in her life until June, 1863, when she came again to America, principally for the purpose of acting for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission. For this charity she appeared in Philadelphia, September 12 ; in Boston, September 16 ; in Baltimore, October 19 ; and in New York, October 22, — realizing for the fund a total sum of eight thousand two hundred and sixty-seven dollars.

Dr. Henry W. Bellows, President of the United States Sanitary Commission, thus wrote, in a card which he published after Miss Cushman had sailed for Europe : —

"This magnificent product of the genius of Miss Cushman, devoted to the relief of our suffering soldiers, is only the most striking exemplification yet made of woman's power and will to do her full part in the national struggle. . . . It is due to Miss Charlotte Cushman to say that this extraordinary gift of money, so magically evoked by her spell, is but the least part

of the service which, ever since the war began, she has been rendering our cause in Europe. Her earnest faith in the darkest hours, her prophetic confidence in our success, her eloquent patriotism in all presences, have been potent influences abroad, and deserve and command the gratitude of the whole nation."

It was during the same visit that Miss Cushman read the Ode on the occasion of the dedication of the Great Organ in the Boston Music Hall.

In the course of the following winter a splendid album, containing pictures in oil and water colors, painted by artists of the cities in which Miss Cushman had acted for the great cause of the day, was forwarded to her in Rome, as an expression of the appreciation of her efforts for the aid of our soldiers.

She resumed her usual mode of life in Europe, going between Rome and England, and there are signs that her health was already affected by the insidious disease which she had inherited; but she kept up her interest in everything, especially in what was occurring here. On March 4, 1865, she wrote: "What a day this is at home! How grand Mr. Lincoln must feel that, by the sheer force of honesty, integrity, and patience, he has overcome faction to such an extent that he is to-day, by the *convictions* of the whole people, placed again in the presidential chair to guide and protect their interests for four more years. The first election of a President may have come through popular clamor, through the passions and excitements of the moment being successfully played upon by popular orators; but the calm reindorsement of faith in his

judgment, reason, calmness, prudence, and goodness, after such a four years, is a spectacle sublime in the eyes of men and angels, at a juncture like the present, when the world looks on in curious wonder and doubt and distrust at the struggle upon which depend republican institutions for all future time. God help him to keep true and faithful !”

During the next month, when the news came of Mr. Lincoln's death and the attack upon Mr. Seward, the anxiety and unhappiness of Americans in Rome was very great ; and when it is remembered that Mr. Seward and Miss Cushman were warm friends, her personal sorrow will be appreciated. Her letters to Miss Seward, and after her death to Mr. Seward, are very interesting. In one of these she speaks of her own health as having prevented her from coming to America the previous summer ; and yet, with deep personal sorrow in her heart, and physical suffering in addition, there were those about her who drew all their strength from her hope and courage. She was indeed, then, the *cross-bearer* ; and so great was the effect she produced upon the Americans in Rome that some of them have since declared that they even walked the streets in the hope of meeting her and hearing her strong, cheerful words.

Meantime political excitements had arisen in Italy, prior to the Austrian war ; and in May, 1866, when troops were being moved and all sorts of hindrances existed in the way of travelling, Miss Cushman was summoned to London by the illness of her mother. She made all possible haste, but news of Mrs. Cush-

man's death met her in Paris. This grief affected her seriously in health and spirits.

In the autumn she returned to Rome, and during that winter (1867) was very much interested in a Danish sculptor, Wilhelm Mathieu, who was old and poor. Several years before he had made for a Russian Grand Duchess three busts of musical composers, — Palestrina, Mozart, and Beethoven ; and Miss Cushman proposed that if the plaster casts of these works, which she presented to the Boston Music Hall, should be admired sufficiently, a fund should be raised to put them into marble, for which purpose she would give a benefit performance. In the *Atlantic Monthly* for April, 1868, there appeared a long article relative to these busts, written by Mr. John Sullivan Dwight. Miss Cushman's plan did not meet with the desired response, and nothing more was ever done about the matter.

In the autumn of 1867 Miss Cushman was on the coast of Cornwall, and in one of her letters spoke of the likeness of Bude to Newport, and said, " I am so much better and stronger for this wild, unceremonious life among the rocks and deep-sea caves." But her condition gradually became more and more alarming, until in the spring of 1869 she consulted Dr. J. Marion Sims, in Paris. Her disease was cancer of the breast, and Dr. Sims earnestly advised her " to do nothing, to live well, take care of her general health, amuse herself, and forget her trouble if possible." Miss Stebbins, in her biography of Miss Cushman, expresses regret that this course was not followed ; but Miss Cushman was restless under the feeling that possibly some

quick relief existed, and finally, after consulting Sir James Paget, she went to Edinburgh, where Sir James Simpson performed an operation for her relief. An account of the remarkable manner in which she met this trial appeared in the *New York Evening Post* after her death. A portion of this article is here given. The writer, who signs with the initials J. C., after telling of the first meeting with Miss Cushman at Malvern, says : —

“Miss Cushman was in excellent spirits and apparently in full health, not one of us supposing for a moment the cause of her leaving Italy. . . . As we left the house at a late hour she said : ‘So you are going to Edinburgh ! Well, I shall see you there shortly ; and will you kindly look up some lodgings for Miss Stebbins and myself?’ Soon after our arrival the ladies followed. . . . Almost every evening for a week we visited them, — always agreeably entertained by the lively manners of Miss Cushman, although we could but notice an increasing shade of melancholy on the face of her faithful companion.

“At last she said one day as we parted : ‘Don’t come here to-morrow ; I do not think I shall be very well for a day or two.’ On the next day, after dinner at Sir James Simpson’s, a remark having been casually made by some one that Miss Cushman was complaining of a slight illness, Sir James cried : ‘Slight illness ! Do you know that I operated on her for cancer this morning?’ . . . It was a terrible operation, occupying fifty-six minutes in its performance, and borne by the sufferer with the most heroic fortitude.

“After a fortnight had passed, and the dangerous symptoms which supervened had disappeared, Miss Cushman sent a message that she was ready to see us again. I shall never forget the impression she then made upon us as she sat pillowed up in her easy-chair, — the placid repose of her pale face, in which every masculine trait had softened down and melted into the tenderness of her sex.

“‘I have not been very well, lately,’ she said, ‘but I am glad to see you again;’ nor did she then or afterward allude to her complaint. Day by day we watched her steady improvement until she was herself again, declaiming as she talked, and electrifying us with her eloquence of word and thought. . . . Had the operation been completely successful she would doubtless have continued in private life.

“But to her knowledge that she labored under an incurable malady the public is indebted for her latest and most wonderful displays of histrionic talent, to which she devoted her powers for the sole purpose of driving her thought away from herself. The world has not known what prompted Charlotte Cushman, in her later years, to reappear upon the stage, — how small was her ambition for applause, and how little she regarded pecuniary gain.”

The operation took place on the 26th of August, 1869, and very serious complications followed; her life seemed to hang in the balance, but a good constitution and an iron will prevailed, and she rallied. For a short time it was hoped that the disease was baffled. In November she went again to Rome. She never

fully regained her strength, however, after the great nervous shock of the operation, and in the course of the winter she knew but too well that all she had endured had availed nothing.

In the spring of 1870 she again sought the advice of Sir James Paget, who had before approved of Sir James Simpson's course. This year Miss Cushman urged him to consent to the treatment of excision by caustic. At last he consented, and during the month of June she submitted to this exquisitely painful process with her accustomed courage. Again hopes of a cure were indulged for a brief space ; she went to Malvern to "build up ;" but very soon the unfavorable symptoms reappeared, and she resolved to revisit America.

CHAPTER IX.

1870-1874.

IN October, 1870, Miss Cushman sailed from England for the last time, and soon after her arrival in America she appeared as a reader of Shakespeare. It seems almost like a slight to Miss Cushman *to say* that her success was great,—at first thought that would appear to “go without saying ;” but when we consider what a different matter it is to render *all* the parts of a play instead of one, the reading of Shakespeare assumes immense proportions. In this department Miss Cushman has been equalled only by Fanny Kemble, and excelled by none. Her great personal magnetism attracted her audiences and held them in sympathy with her ; her directness, her subtle humor, her force of manner, and, above all, her imaginative weirdness, all combined to produce an effect as yet unrivalled by any one of the great army of “readers” who have followed her. Her most important readings were the plays of Shakespeare, but she by no means limited herself to these. She went “from grave to gay, from lively to severe,” and her mingling of tenderness, delicacy, pathos, and humor, with her intensity in passionate parts, could nowhere find such scope as in the works of Shakespeare. But the usual sequence of the comedy is as



much relished after the tragedy in reading as in acting, and her renderings of "Betsey and I are Out," and "Miss Maloney on the Chinese Question," were always heartily relished, as they deserved to be. Her reading of dialect poems was simply exquisite, while purely lyrical selections, like the "Lady of Shalott," were no less justly given. When she read heroic pieces, such as "The Charge of the Light Brigade," "Hervé Riel," and "The Battle of Ivry," she poured out all the enthusiasm and spiritual force of her own nature, and inevitably wrought to the very highest pitch the same qualities in her audience.

During the winter of 1870 Miss Cushman went to Newport to try the air there, as it had been recommended to her for a winter residence. She soon determined to build "Villa Cushman," and with her accustomed celerity executed her plan.

It was in this year that she wrote thus sadly : —

"I am waiting ; seeking all simple aids that can palliate my trouble ; avoiding all things that can fatigue me ; leading for the most part and for the first time in my life an *idle* existence, but I hope, with God's help, not a useless one for all that ; for in trying to train myself to patience perhaps I am helping those who love me and suffer with me."

Her physicians advised her to work, for they saw that change, occupation, and constant diversion were necessary to her ; and after such a life as hers had been the resources of a Newport winter would have been very tame to her, — not sufficient to banish her doubts and fears for a single hour ; but while in pub-

lic, either in acting or reading, she was not ill or suffering, — not Charlotte Cushman, but for the time she was — any one whom she had elected to be.

On Sept. 25, 1871, she was at Booth's Theatre, appearing as *Queen Katherine*, *Lady Macbeth*, and *Meg Merrilies*. Her engagement lasted until November 4, and the enthusiasm and sympathy which the public then manifested for her bore full witness to the esteem in which her acting was held, and to the power she still exerted over her audiences. I shall here give some quoted opinions of Miss Cushman as *Queen Katherine*, which character is very generally considered her masterpiece. The first is from Mr. William Winter, in the *New York Tribune* : —

“In dealing with the conceptions of Shakespeare, Miss Cushman's spirit was the same, but her method was different. As *Meg Merrilies*, she obeyed the law of her own nature ; as *Queen Katherine*, she obeyed the law of the poetic ideal that encompassed her. In that stately, sweet, and pathetic character, and again, though to a less extent, in the terrible yet tender character of *Lady Macbeth*, both of which she apprehended through an intellect always clear and an imagination always adequate, the form and limitations prescribed by the dominant genius of the poet were scrupulously respected. She made Shakespeare real, but she never dragged him down to the level of the actual. She knew the heights of that wondrous intuition and potent magnetism, and she lifted herself and her hearers to their grand and beautiful eminence. Her best achievements in the illustration of Shakespeare were accordingly of the high-

est order of art. They were at once human and poetic. They were white marble suffused with fire. They thrilled the heart with emotion and passion, and they filled the imagination with a thoroughly satisfying sense of beauty, power, and completeness. They have made her illustrious. They have done much to assert the possible grandeur and beneficence of the stage, and to confirm it in the affectionate esteem of thoughtful men and women. They remain now as a rich legacy in the remembrance of this generation, and they will pass into history among the purest, highest, and most cherished works that genius has inspired and art has accomplished to adorn an age of culture and to elevate the human mind."

The following is from the pen of Mr. H. A. Clapp, and appeared in the *Boston Advertiser*, May 4, 1875, during her final engagement: —

"Simple with the simplicity of true art, powerfully and imaginatively conceived, and expressed with a rare commingling of queenly dignity and womanly pathos, this noble effort commends itself to every refined taste, to every cultivated mind, and to every sensitive heart. After the weak, unintellectual acting which has lately been inflicted upon us in serious and Shakespearian parts, . . . it is indeed a feast to witness Miss Cushman's finished and discriminating acting, and, above all, to listen to her pure and expressive delivery of the text, in which every one of the master dramatist's golden words is made to yield its treasure of thought, and yet in due relation and proportion to every other factor of the meaning.

“ In Miss Cushman’s present assumption we see little variation from her former performance, except that she now emphasizes the queenly and majestic side of the character a little more than before, and thus makes its pathetic aspect somewhat less conspicuous. A good illustration of this appears in Miss Cushman’s delivery of her last lines in the Trial scene ; the words, —

‘ I will not tarry ; no, nor evermore,
Upon this business, my appearance make
In any of their courts,’ —

which Miss Cushman used to give with a burst of anguish, as if the overfraught heart could bear its weight no longer, she now declaims with fiery, passionate intensity. Miss Cushman also dwells more than used to be her wont upon the physical horrors of her Sick scene, with a gain to its sensational effect, but with a slight loss, as we think, to the beauty and serenity which should be its most marked qualities. But the whole of this last scene is, as ever, most touching in its naturalness, and most noble in its moral grandeur and sweetness.”

Miss Elizabeth Peabody thus wrote of the first time that she saw Miss Cushman in this character : —

“ I need not say how I enjoyed her splendid impersonation throughout, but specially the Death scene. It was perfectly wonderful how she blended the infirmities of dying with the majesty of her spirit. But especially I was struck anew with the miraculous genius of Shakespeare, as evinced in that last speech to *Cromwell*, in which *Queen Katherine* characterized *Wolsey*

in those sharp, heavily thought-freighted sentences, which it was obvious must be just so concise and terse because the fast-coming death so overcame her power to utter, that it was only by the intense will that she could utter at all, and so was forced to concentrate much in the few words of each sentence. Then, in the very death, she did not seem to struggle much, — did not evince physical pain, only torpor of organs. She went out of the body almost visibly, while the song of angels was sung behind the scenes.”

The engagement at Booth's, spoken of above, was very successful; the receipts for forty-two nights were fifty-seven thousand dollars. I shall give one other extract, from a journal of the day, which refers to her in the part of *Queen Katherine*: —

“She acted with remarkable strength and fire. That she would bring back to the stage her old earnestness and subtlety, her unique command of all the resources of art, and her keen appreciation of the text, — enriching even the spaces between the lines with wonderful suggestiveness of look and gesture, — we quite expected; but last night she did more; she threw into her performance a vigor and intensity not inferior, as we remember them, to those characteristics in her best days. . . . If weakness exists it is more than atoned for by the splendor of her intelligence, her scholarly and refined elocution, the pathos, the simplicity, the effectiveness of her action. It is one thing to play a queen's part; it is another thing to look like a queen. . . . There was royalty in her demeanor, a consciousness of power in every movement, which made her the *one* figure of interest on the stage.”

The following anecdote shows what a place her passion for the stage held in her very soul, and makes us wonder, with her, how she could live away from it. It was on the opening night of this first engagement at Booth's, when she played *Queen Katherine* and was greeted with the wildest enthusiasm by an immense audience. At the close of the first act she was called before the curtain and received tremendous applause ; after this some one saw her in the wings quivering from head to foot with excitement, her eyes wells of flame. Just then the storm of applause burst out afresh for a second "call ;" as Miss Cushman heard it she threw up her arms with a peculiar gesture, and cried out in a tone of indescribable, passionate, eager ecstasy : " Oh ! how have I ever lived without this through all these years ! "

She next filled an engagement in Boston, and while there wrote the following letter to a friend in England : —

" Your letter should have been acknowledged long ere this, but I have been the busiest and hardest-worked human being you *ever knew* for these last thirteen weeks. I do not remember even in my youngest days ever to have accomplished so much, for then I had only my profession, and no society duty to attend to as well. I have been hard at work bodily, mentally, socially, and not, I hope, worthlessly. If you have seen any of the New York papers from about the 26th September and 17th October to 29th of the same, you would have seen that my country-people give me credit for growth in grace, and *believe* now

firmly that they have a Siddons of their own ! Of course it is not displeasing to me to be so considered, but *I know better !* I dare say I have grown intellectually, and my suffering has been sent to me in vain if I have not improved in spirit during all the time I have been away from my profession ; but as a mere actress I was as good, if not better, eleven years ago than I am now. But what is printed lives for us, and what is conceived and acted lives only in the *memory* of the beholder ; thus I am glad that such things should be *printed* of me. I do not think it has hurt me physically to work. While the recognition has done my soul and spirit good, I feel that I have not labored in vain.

“Then, after New York, when I went to my native city, Boston, where they never believed in me as much as they did elsewhere, I came to have such praise as made my *heart* satisfied, and they indorsed their good opinions in a substantial way, which was also good. The City Council paid me a great honor in formally announcing to the world that one of their chief boasts, their public school system, should be associated with my name, by enacting that henceforth and forever the school building, which had been erected on the site where stood the house in which I was born, was to be known as the *Cushman School*. This from old Puritan stock, which believes that the public school is the throne of the State, was a greater honor than any I could have received from them. I was proud, first, that I as an actress had won it ; then, secondly, that for the first time this had been bestowed on a woman ;

and then came the civic pride, in knowing that my towns-people should care that I ever was born. Nothing in all my life has so pleased me as this."

The scene when Miss Cushman visited the school was thus described : —

"Miss Cushman made a tour of the building, gracing each room with her presence. Then all were assembled in the hall for a dedicatory service. On the floor were seated the pupils, — a thousand girls ; on the platform, teachers and visitors ; and, in the centre, Miss Cushman. Here she made her 'maiden speech,' as she smilingly said. Those upturned girlish faces were all the inspiration she needed, and a flush of enthusiasm gathered on her pale face. For their encouragement she told them she walked those very streets a school-girl as poor as the poorest among them. With rapid gestures of her large, shapely hands, her eyes glowing with the fire of her own peculiar genius and her habitual intensity, she told them that whatever she had attained had been by giving *herself to her work*. A patience that tired not, an energy that faltered not, a persistence that knew no flagging, principles that swerved not, — and the victory was hers after long years of hard work. Higher than her intellectual strength, higher than her genius, her culture, or graces of character, she ranked her ability for *work*. This was the secret of her success, and the legacy she bequeathed the girls of the Cushman School. They knew something of her history, — that she had educated herself ; that she had stoutly resisted the shafts of disease ; that the great men of the age delighted to do her

honor ; that she was an earnest, religious woman, upon whose fair name rested no cloud of suspicion. They felt the soft womanliness of her character shining out from the majesty of her strength, and who can say how many impulses 'To dare and do and be' were born there?"

Early in January, 1872, Miss Cushman started on an extended tour. She read and acted in many places, and did not reach her new home in Newport until June ; and even after that she read at Narragansett and Newport for the benefit of local charities. She allowed herself but little rest, and in October began another season's work. She was acting in Boston in November, when the great fire interrupted her engagement. In December she went to the West, and early in the new year (1873) joined Mr. Lawrence Barrett's company in New Orleans. She was under an engagement to act with Mr. Barrett, but after a week she became very ill. She struggled, with almost superhuman determination, to adhere to her plans ; each morning she declared herself better, and anticipated acting at night, but before the day was over she was forced to yield to her weakness, and was constantly disappointed. At last, wretched and suffering as she was, she made a fatiguing and comfortless journey to Philadelphia, and after a rest and medical care resumed her work in Washington in March.

I am not sure that the following anecdote belongs to this visit to New Orleans ; but it is a well authenticated one, and I believe that the incident occurred at this time. Judge R——, who was famed for his good

dinners and his conversational powers, made a dinner-party for Miss Cushman. When they were seated at table, the Judge at the end and Miss Cushman on his right, she was attracted by the appearance of Mr. H——, who sat opposite her. Before long he spoke, and she was much interested in him ; but the loquacious Judge gave little opportunity for any other person to talk, and as often as Miss Cushman asked a question to draw Mr. H—— out, so often the Judge interrupted and gave his opinion. At last Miss Cushman said, "Judge R——, may I be allowed to tell you that I wish to hear Mr. H—— talk a little?" or words to that effect.

Naturally the Judge subsided, but it was for the first time in his life ; and as this occurred but a short time before his death it was sometimes jokingly said to have been fatal to him.

Mr. H—— accompanied Miss Cushman to her hotel ; and in the course of the drive, which was three or four miles, she endeavored to persuade Mr. H—— that Forrest was not a good actor, and gave what seemed to her valid reasons for this opinion. When they reached the St. Charles, as she descended from the carriage, she said, "I hope I have convinced you, Mr. H——." With his courtly manner he lifted his hat, bowed, and said, "Charmed, Miss Cushman, but not converted !"

Everything in her life now seemed tinged with sadness. A deep, dark shadow hung over all, and some of her letters, written from 1872 to 1874, sound as if for herself the drama was ended and the curtain about to

fall. But for the sake of others she tried to be hopeful, to be the same strong friend on whom they had leaned so long. I give a few extracts from these letters, without dates or order, to tell in her own words how sad and suffering she was.

“I do get so dreadfully depressed about myself, and all things seem so hopeless to me at those times, that I pray God to take me quickly at any moment, so that I am not allowed to torture those I love by letting them see my pain. But when the dark hour passes, and I try to forget by constant occupation that I have had such a load near my heart, then it is not so bad.”

To a friend in sorrow she wrote : —

“God bless you, and help you in all ways to bear, to endure, and be patient. This is the best prayer I can make for you, and it covers all the ground of a life. From my soul I make it a hundred times a day ; but prayers are all I can give you to help you. I am not able to come to give you comfort and strength by my presence.”

“I do not get over my dreadful depression and sickness of heart, and I cannot reason myself out of it. I suppose it is that I am weaker than ever before, and the summer has been a greater strain upon me than I knew until the reaction came. I have had much trial this summer, more than any one knows. First, the excitement of getting into the house ; then the heat, the arrival of the things from Rome, and the sickness of soul over the memories that were awakened at the sight of them ; but, most of all, the wrench I had at last in the departure of my children, the breaking up

and being left alone. I have been very lonely. This is a confession of weakness ; but enough of myself."

She now constantly closed her letters with these words : " Ah, I pray God in his infinite mercy to take me quickly, that I may not wear out those who love me ! "

Still she worked and worked on. From Toledo, in November, 1873, she wrote : —

" I have got off acting at a *matinée*, which was first intended ; and I shall give thanks for that, and all the infinite mercies of God to me, for they are *manifold*. I am suffering a good deal more pain than I like to acknowledge, and only when I am on the stage or asleep am I unconscious of it. This has been unceasing since the summer, and I suppose I must expect it ; but while I can bear it I am wrong to give any expression of it, even to you. It is wicked of me to say anything about it, and I have a great mind to destroy this letter ; and yet, — and yet, when we regularly *face* our real troubles I believe they become more endurable, and the thought conveyed in one of your last letters, that anything happening to me would kill you, gives me much sad thought. I have been spared much longer than you or I ever thought possible when my trouble first declared itself. We ought to be better prepared by this time, and we must accept the inevitable ; though I am a poor creature to talk in this way, for I cannot accept even the inevitable without fighting. I have fought, God knows, very hard for four years, especially the two last ; but I know my enemy ; he is ever before me, and he must conquer ; but I can-

not give up to him. I laugh in his face, and try to be jolly, — and I am ! I declare I am, even when he presses me hardest.”

When in Chicago, during this winter, a very pleasant thing happened to her, in this wise. It was the last night of her engagement at M‘Vicker’s Theatre, and the company with whom she had acted had found her so kindly and friendly to all, from the most important member down to the people employed about the stage, that they had determined to give her a little testimonial of their regard. The gift was a heavy gold ring upon which was inscribed “KIND WORDS !”

Mr. M‘Vicker presented it in behalf of the company. “During all the preliminary proceedings Miss Cushman had stood like one utterly at a loss to know what it was all about. The perspiration stood in beads on her forehead, and she who had faced hundreds of thousands glanced about as nervously and uneasily as the veriest novice. When, however, Mr. M‘Vicker placed the ring in her hand with the accompanying letter, her expressive face relaxed into a broad smile of unmistakable surprise and pleasure, and, as a tear glistened for a moment in her eye and then stole down her cheek, in a few broken words she expressed her deep gratitude and delight at receiving such a token, in such a way, and from such a source.”

In February, 1874, she was quite ill in Baltimore, but soon rallied, and then for a time seemed more hopeful, and later in the spring went through a laborious series of readings in New York. The following notice is from the *Tribune* of May 8, 1874. After say-

ing that Miss Cushman was received with great applause, and that all the seats in the Academy of Music were filled, it continues : —

“ Miss Cushman’s programme on Wednesday was less dramatic than either of its predecessors. . . . It is no slight matter to succeed, through the medium of a reading, in presenting eight or ten different persons, each distinctly individualized and made a living reality to the eyes of the imagination. Miss Cushman always effects this result, and she wrought it in her treatment of the ‘ Merchant of Venice.’ It did not seem to us, however, that, in this instance, her portraitures, when they were finished and set before the mind, amounted to anything more than conventional creatures of the stage. Her *Shylock*, certainly, was invested with no color of that religious exaltation and Oriental majesty which makes him great in the pages of Shakespeare. His vindictive cruelty was made conspicuous, and was permitted to swallow up all other attributes. . . . The fact, probably, is that Miss Cushman feels no real sympathy with the play of ‘ The Merchant of Venice,’ and finds nothing in it to arouse the imagination, the pathos, the weird and romantic glow of emotion that are the peculiar and thrilling qualities or powers of her nature. You cannot see her *Katherine* or *Wolsey* without experiencing a kind of rapture of anguish and awe ; but you can see her *Shylock* with a calmness that is only disturbed by cold admiration for experienced mimetic skill. Her readings of *Antonio’s* letter and *Portia’s* speech on Mercy were the gems of elocutionary art ; and there was the true spirit of comedy, the shimmer of a sparkling,

evanescent life, in her treatment of *Portia's* first colloquy with *Nerissa*. That same comedy spirit is in decadence upon our stage, and the sense of it, in Miss Cushman's acting, is like an echo of remembered music. It was in one — and but one — of the miscellaneous selections, following the scenes from Shakespeare, that those who recognized the magnetic power of Miss Cushman really felt its thrill, and saw, with sudden tremor, the flash of the eagle's wing. That was in her reading of 'The Whitby Fishing-Smack,' — a ballad of shipwreck and of the wild life of the sea-shore, in which are touched the elemental experiences and sorrows of common humanity. On Miss Cushman's humorous sketches there is no need to comment. In her, as in so many others who are essentially tragic artists, the brilliant flowers of comic humor blossom out of the deep heart of pathos. Her Scotch, Irish, and English Provincial dialect-reading has long been noted for its admirable accuracy, and for the easy grace and homely truth of the character-studies that underlie it and crop out through its verbal foliage."

George T. Ferris thus wrote of her readings : —

"Miss Cushman is now mainly confining herself to the reading-desk. There can be no question that her peculiar intellectualism in art is shown even more in her readings than in her acting, notably so in her Shakespearian readings. In the dramas of Shakespeare, the characters have so essential a play of relation, and are so subtle in their bearings on one another, that, unless they are all justly apprehended, the totality of the drama is maimed and marred. No genius on the

part of Charlotte Cushman could prevent this on the stage. In the reading-desk she reigns as the sole magician, with the perfect opportunity to express the finest attainments of her thinking and culture. She has but to wave her wand to unlock from the prison-house of Shakespeare's pages all the immortal phantoms that brood within them. It is for her alone to invest them with a splendid and subtle life.

"Miss Cushman's devotion to art remains unchanged. For many years she has been among those

'Who live to be the show and gaze of the time.'

That she may remain so for many years to come, and continue to illustrate her great conceptions, as none but she can, is the hope of thousands of admirers on both sides of the Atlantic."

While in New York for these readings (1874) Miss Cushman was undergoing a course of treatment which she believed for the time to be beneficial, and from which she took courage, as is shown in the following note : —

"I am satisfied that the treatment is doing me good ; not, perhaps, by any evidence in my special malady, but in my general condition. I am feeling generally much better. I am certainly going through my work wonderfully ; my spirits are better, and I can do more. I am sure it is the treatment. I am so settled in my faith in this, that I think I will consent to the engagement offered me at Booth's Theatre for October."

CHAPTER X.

1874-1875.

SHE continued the above medical treatment through the summer, and accepted the engagement at Booth's ; but before the time for her appearance arrived, she knew too well that she should act but little more. Her courage in doing so at all seemed miraculous to those who were near her when off the stage, as well as to the actors who supported her. But she found relief in playing ; in fact, the short time in which she was lost to herself in her public impersonations, when she was sleep-walking as *Lady Macbeth*, or dying as *Queen Katherine*, was the only time out of the whole twenty-four hours when she could forget her own mortal agony.

Miss Cushman had also made conditional engagements with other managers in different parts of the country, and when she entered upon her autumn's labors she had not determined upon taking a formal farewell of the stage. Thus, when the great ovation in New York was tendered her, she explained that she had other engagements to act, and that she had besides the intention of still appearing in public as a reader.

During her engagement at Booth's she personated her three great characters, and finally, on November 7,

she appeared as *Lady Macbeth*, with the following cast : —

Lady Macbeth	Miss Cushman.
Macbeth	Mr. George Vandenhoff.
Macduff	Mr. Frederic B. Warde.
Duncan	Mr. Edwin Sheppard.
Banquo	Mr. Charles Wheatleigh.
Malcolm	Mr. Charles Rockwell.
Hecate	Miss Annie Kemp Bowler.
Gentlewoman	Miss Emma Grattan.
First Witch	Mr. Charles Le Clerq.
Second Witch	Miss Mary Wells.
Third Witch	Mr. J. W. Brutone.

It is interesting to recall the fact that Mrs. Siddons and Mr. Macready had also chosen “Macbeth” as their final play. I shall give the account of this evening, and of the remarkable testimonial to Miss Cushman, which appeared in the *New York Tribune*; for, though long, all the incidents are of interest now that that evening has taken its place as an important event in the history of the American drama : —

“Remembrance will long keep in mind the incidents of Saturday night at Booth’s Theatre, when Charlotte Cushman took her final leave of the metropolitan stage. The scene was one of quite extraordinary beauty. The spacious theatre — swept and cleansed and garnished — was crowded in every part, by an assemblage comprising the most that is worthy and distinguished in our civic circle of literature, art, learning, and society. Faces of known and honored persons were seen in every direction. The intellect and the beauty of the metropolis were represented as they very seldom are

Booth's Theatre

Lessees and Managers - - JARRETT & PALMER

ARCADIAN NIGHT

LAST NIGHT of the FAREWELL ENGAGEMENT of the
illustrious Tragedienne, Miss

CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN

And her Final Appearance on the Metropolitan Stage.

This, Saturday Evening, November 7, 1874

When will be presented Shakspeare's sublime tragedy,

M A C B E T H,

With the following ASSIGNMENT OF PARTS:

LADY MACBETH.....	Miss CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN
MACBETH.....	Mr. GEORGE VANDENHOFF
MACDUFF.....	Mr. FREDERICK B. WARDE
DUNCAN.....	Mr. EDWIN SHEPPARD
BANQUO.....	Mr. CHARLES WHEATLEIGH
MALCOLM.....	Mr. CHARLES ROCKWELL
HECATE.....	Miss ANNIE KEMP BOWLER
ROSSE.....	Mr. D. E. RALTON
LENOX.....	Mr. E. K. COLLIER
SEYTON.....	Mr. STUART BOLTON
FLEANCE.....	Miss LILLY NAYLOR
DONALDBAIN.....	Miss JENNY BYRON
PHYSICIAN.....	Mr. JOHN WEAVER
GENTLEWOMAN.....	Miss EMMA GRATTAN
FIRST WITCH.....	Mr. CHARLES LECLERCQ
SECOND WITCH.....	Miss MARY WELLS
THIRD WITCH.....	Mr. J. W. BRUTONE
FIRST APPARITION.....	Mr. FRANK LITTLE
WOUNDED OFFICER.....	Mr. H. C. BRIDGES
FIRST MURDERER.....	Mr. J. MAJOR
SECOND MURDERER.....	THOMAS CONNER
OFFICERS.....	Messrs. CARPENTER, TORRIANI, RANON, etc.

MATTHEW LOCKE'S ORIGINAL MUSIC will be interpreted under direction of Mr. MICHAEL CONNELLY, leader of the orchestra, and the songs, incantations, &c., will be by Miss Annie Kemp Bowler, Miss Mabel Lyndon, Miss Pauline Rutherford, Miss Maria Newman, Miss Jennie Dallimore, Miss Tilly Getchell, Miss Therese Phillips; Mr. Charles Pike, Mr. J. C. Chamberlain, Mr. W. E. Phillips, Mr. Charles Telbin. And the choruses by members of the

CRESCENT SINGING SOCIETY

For this eventful occasion the following appropriate ceremonies, supplementary to the play, have been arranged, and will be under the auspices of the ARCADIAN CLUB;

1. MUSIC by the ORCHESTRA, Mr. MICHAEL CONNELLY, Conductor.
2. READING by PROFESSOR ROBERTS, New York College, of an original ode, written for the occasion by the poet, R. H. STODDARD.
3. ADDRESS TO MISS CUSHMAN by the eminent citizen, WM. CULLEN BRYANT. Presentation of a Floral Tribute from the Arcadian Club.
4. RESPONSE by Miss CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN.

During these proceedings the stage will also be occupied by the ARCADIAN, ARMY AND NAVY, PALETTE, LOTOS, and MANHATTAN CLUBS; managers of the principal metropolitan and suburban theatres, with the leading members of their companies, and the journalistic profession.

in the theatres of to-day. The house was brilliantly illuminated, and it was decorated with a taste at once profuse and delicate. A tricolor, spangled with golden stars, was twined about the proscenium columns, and hung in festoons along the fronts of the galleries. The chandeliers were garlanded with autumn leaves, and with leaves and fruit of the vine, — symbolical of the maturity of that genius and the ripeness of that fame in which Miss Cushman retires from the theatre. Banners displaying the arms of the States were ranged along the upper tier. The flag of the Republic formed an arch over the central entrance, and flung its cheerful and hopeful folds over the proscenium boxes. In one of these boxes, inscribed in golden letters with the name of the Arcadian Club, — which society prompted this demonstration, and has carried it forward to signal and honorable success, — sat the poet Bryant, the poet Stoddard, Peter Cooper, and other distinguished guests of the club. In the opposite proscenium box, inscribed with the name of the Army and Navy Club, sat Major-General Hancock, Mr. Tilden, and other dignitaries of peace and of war. Perfumes, from great silver braziers upon the stage, made the air fragrant, and the dreamy music of the dear old Scotch melodies turned it into poetry and attuned every heart to sympathy with the spirit of the time. All that could be desired of intellect and brilliancy in an audience, and all that could be devised of tasteful accessories for a great occasion, were gathered and provided here ; and the occasion proved in every way worthy of the motive that prompted it, the idea that it celebrated, and the anticipation it had aroused.

“Upon the performance there is now no reason to pause. It was marked by great and careful zeal in every respect, and it proved deeply impressive and satisfactory, and awoke at times the most emphatic approbation. Mr. Vandenhoff and Miss Cushman were four times called before the curtain, and Mr. Warde was recalled both at the end of *Macduff's* scene in act fourth and at the end of the play. Mr. Vandenhoff acted with all his usual correctness, and more than his usual fire, especially in the Banquet scene. Miss Cushman presented all those great tragic points of superlative excellence, and that profound and agonizing identification with the character, which have made her *Lady Macbeth* famous. The only new business was (and this may not be new to others) the method of terminating the third act, by making separate exits for the king and queen, and thus allowing *Lady Macbeth* a larger opportunity to express the ravages of her remorse. This was greatly done by Miss Cushman; but it sacrifices the pathetic idea of affectionate sympathy between these remorseful and horror-haunted murderers, in the desperation of their plight and in the awful eminence of their guilt and misery, and therefore is of questionable character. Miss Cushman's art in *Lady Macbeth* is perfect; and it would be easily possible to fill a column with enumeration of its subtle beauties, such as the shrinking from *Duncan's* hand, when he offers it to lead her into the castle, and such as the wonderful by-play in which she so continually denotes her sense of her husband's complex, kindly, irresolute character. But there is now no call for this. The personation has passed into history

as one of the greatest dramatic achievements of our age, and the word for the hour is not so much a recognition of its established excellence as of record of an ovation, not more brilliant than deserved, to illustrious genius and imperishable renown.

“ It was about eleven o’clock when the curtain fell upon the tragedy. An interval ensued, which was filled with the hum of voices, the bustle of the moving multitude, and the music of Mr. Connelly’s band. Then the curtain was again lifted, and one of the most distinguished companies that have ever been seen in a public place came into view. The stage was crowded. Prominent in the throng were Mr. Wallack, Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Boucicault, Mr. Gilbert, Miss Charlotte Thompson, and other professional friends of Miss Cushman. The venerable face of William Cullen Bryant, austere yet tender, shone out of the central throng. Mr. Charles Roberts, who had been selected by the Arcadian Club to read Mr. Stoddard’s Ode, appeared at the right of the stand, which was wrought of the beautiful floral testimonials offered to Miss Cushman. The actress herself, hailed by plaudits that almost shook the building, entered and took her place upon the left of the stage ; and the ceremonies of farewell began. Mr. Stoddard’s poem carries along with it its own testimonial. It is conceived and written in a simple spirit and style ; it is worthy of the genuine theme and the lofty occasion ; and it was uttered with sympathy and force, and received with every mark of public pleasure, — the applause at the end of the stanza which couples Cushman with Shakespeare being in a marked degree spontaneous and emphatic, and

the demonstration at the close being as full of heart as of sound, which is saying much for its fervor. Mr. Stoddard, writing in a difficult verse, because so simple in form and so devoid of ornament, and on a subject so difficult to treat with freshness of feeling and novelty of thought, has herein done great credit to his own delicate genius as well as suitable honor to the greatest actress of our time. The Ode is here given : —

SALVE, REGINA.

BY RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

The race of greatness never dies;
Here, there, its fiery children rise,
 Perform their splendid parts,
And captive take our hearts.

Men, women, of heroic mould,
Have overcome us from of old;
 Crowns waited then, as now,
For every royal brow.

The victor in the Olympian Games —
His name among the proudest names
 Was handed deathless down :
To him the olive crown.

And they, the poets, grave and sage,
Stern masters of the tragic stage,
 Who moved by art austere
To pity, love, and fear, —

To these was given the laurel crown,
Whose lightest leaf conferred renown
That through the ages fled
Still circles each gray head.

But greener laurels cluster now,
World-gathered, on his spacious brow,
In his supremest place,
Greatest of their great race, —

Shakespeare ! Honor to him, and her
Who stands his great interpreter,
Stepped out of his broad page,
Upon the living stage.

The unseen hands that shape our fate
Moulded her strongly, made her great,
And gave her for her dower
Abundant life and power.

To her the sister Muses came,
Proffered their masks, and promised fame :
She chose the tragic — rose
To its imperial woes.

What queen unqueened is here ? What wife,
Whose long bright years of loving life
Are suddenly darkened ? Fate
Has crushed, but left her great.

Abandoned for a younger face,
She sees another fill her place,
Be more than she has been —
Most wretched wife and queen.

O royal sufferer! Patient heart!
Lay down thy burdens and depart :
 " Mine eyes grow dim. Farewell."
 They ring her passing bell.

And thine, thy knell shall soon be rung,
Lady, the valor of whose tongue,
 That did not urge in vain,
 Stung the irresolute Thane

To bloody thoughts and deeds of death —
The evil genius of Macbeth ;
 But thy strong will must break,
 And thy poor heart must ache.

Sleeping, she sleeps not ; night betrays
The secret that consumes her days.
 Behold her where she stands,
 And rubs her guilty hands.

From darkness, by the midnight fire,
Withered and weird, in wild attire,
 Starts spectral on the scene
 The stern old Gypsy Queen.

She croons his simple cradle song,
She will redress his ancient wrong, —
 The rightful heir come back
 With Murder on his track.

Commanding, crouching, dangerous, kind,
Confusion in her darkened mind,
 The pathos of her years
 Compels the soul to tears.

Bring laurel ! Go, ye tragic Three,
And strip the sacred laurel-tree,
And at her feet lay down
Here, now, a triple crown.

Salve, Regina ! Art and Song,
Dismissed by thee, shall miss thee long,
And keep thy memory green —
Our most illustrious Queen.

“ Mr. Roberts delivered this poem with a calm force and an appropriate diversity of expression, which, under the trying circumstances of the hour, can only be described as extraordinary. Seldom in a lifetime does it occur to any man to have such an audience as listened to this utterance, and found poetry made more poetic by the speaker's earnest soul and melodious voice.

“ Mr. Bryant, who was received with a tumult of applause, next addressed Miss Cushman in a speech of equal simplicity and fitness, of which the essential part is here printed : —

‘ MADAM, — The members of the Arcadian Club have desired me to present to you the Crown of Laurel. Although of late years little familiar with matters connected with the stage, I make it a pleasure to comply with their request. Be pleased to receive it as both a token of their proud admiration of your genius and their high esteem for your personal character. You remember the line of the poet, Spenser, —

“ The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors.”

Well is that line applied in the present instance. The

laurel is the proper ornament for the brows of one who has won so eminent and enviable a renown by successive conquests in the realm of histrionic art. You have taken a queenly rank in your profession. You have carried into one department of it after another the triumphs of your genius. You have interpreted, through the eye and ear, to the sympathies of vast assemblages of men and women, the words of the greatest dramatic writers. What came to your hand in the skeleton form you have clothed with sinews and flesh, and given it warm blood and a beating heart. Receive, then, the laurel crown as a token of what is conceded to you, as a symbol of the regal state in your profession to which you have risen, and which you so illustriously hold.'

"Miss Cushman — who during the delivery of the poem and address had maintained an attitude in which natural dignity and the effort at composure struggled with deep feeling and an instinctive wish to deprecate so much eulogium — responded in the following words : —

"'Beggar that I am, — I am even poor in thanks,'" but I thank you ! Gentlemen, the heart has no speech ; its only language is a tear or a pressure of the hand, and words very feebly convey or interpret its emotions. Yet I would beg you to believe that in the three little words I now speak — "I thank you" — there are heart-depths which I should fail to express better though I should use a thousand other words. I thank you, gentlemen, for the great honor you have offered to me. I thank you not only for myself, but for my whole profession, to which, through and by

me, you have paid this very graceful compliment. (Applause.)

“ ‘ If the few words I am about to say savor of egotism or vainglory, you will, I am sure, pardon me, inasmuch as I am here only to speak of myself ! You would seem to compliment me upon an honorable life. As I look back upon that life it seems to me that it would have been absolutely impossible for me to have led any other. In this I have, perhaps, been mercifully helped more than are many of my more beautiful sisters in art. I was, by a press of circumstances, thrown at an early age into a profession for which I had received no special education or schooling, but I had already, though so young, been brought face to face with necessity. I found life sadly real and intensely earnest ; and in my ignorance of other ways of study, I resolved to take therefrom my text and my watchword ; to be thoroughly in earnest, intensely in earnest, in all my thoughts and in all my actions, whether in my profession or out of it, became my one single idéa. And I honestly believe herein lies the secret of my success in life. I do not believe that any great success in any art can be achieved without it !

“ ‘ I say this to the beginners in my profession ; and I am sure all the associates in my art, who have honored me with their presence on this occasion, will indorse what I say in this. Art is an absolute mistress ; she will not be coquetted with or slighted ; she requires the most entire self-devotion, and she repays with grand triumphs ! (Vehement applause.)

“ ‘ To you, Gentlemen of the Arcadian Club, and to

all who have united to do me honor ; to the younger poet who has enthroned me in his verse, and to the older poet who brings the prestige of his name and fame to add a glory to the crown he offers me ; to the managers of this theatre, who have so liberally met all my wishes and requirements during this engagement, as well as to the members of the company who have so cheerfully seconded my efforts ; and last, not least, to the members of my profession who have so graciously added by their presence to the happiness of this occasion, — I return my cordial thanks.

“ ‘To my public, — what shall I say? From the bottom of my heart I thank you, who have given me always consideration, encouragement, and patience ; who have been ever my support, my comfort, my main help ! I do not now say farewell to you in the usual sense of the word. In making my final representations upon the mimic scene, in the various cities of the country, I have reserved to myself the right of meeting you again — where you have made me believe that I give you the pleasure, which I receive myself at the same time — at the reading desk. (Great excitement.) To you, then, I say, may you fare well, and may I fare well, until at no distant day we meet again there. Meanwhile, good, kind friends, good-night ! and God be with you.’

“ The whole of this was spoken in a most sympathetic way, but the portion of it in which Miss Cushman addressed the public had, perhaps, the strongest effect. This was very earnest and tender, and there were tones in the speaker’s voice which meant more than words.

At the close of this address, after the applause subsided, Miss Annie Kemp Bowler came forward and sang the sweet, familiar song of 'Auld Lang Syne,' in the chorus to which the entire throng upon the stage, and finally some persons in the audience, heartily joined; and amidst this touching music, and the mighty plaudits of four thousand spectators, the curtain finally fell upon the Farewell appearance of Charlotte Cushman.

"Among the prominent citizens who took part in this demonstration, appearing in the boxes and upon the stage, were the following: the Hon. Henry G. Stebbins, Governor-elect Samuel J. Tilden, the Hon. William M. Evarts, Mayor-elect William H. Wickham, Algernon S. Sullivan, Charles Watrous, the Hon. Edwards Pierrepont, the Hon. Clarence A. Seward, the Hon. B. W. Griswold, Peter Cooper, Abram S. Hewitt, Sidney Webster, the Hon. R. B. Roosevelt, Judge John R. Brady, Parke Godwin, G. G. Haven, J. M. Bundy, Professor R. Ogden Doremus, Clark Bell, S. N. Salomon, E. G. Thompson, B. K. Phelps, W. R. Travers, W. H. Vanderbilt, Colonel John Hay, E. Agramonte, Albert Weber, J. N. Pattison, Charles Roberts, Harry Palmer, W. H. Hurlburt, William Stuart, Rufus Hatch, J. H. Beard, Homer A. Nelson, D. R. Locke, J. W. Carroll, N. Sarony, P. S. Gilmore, Patrick H. Jones, J. B. Polk, Harry Jarrett, D. H. Harkins, Edwin R. Meade, F. B. Warde, Claude Burroughs, Laurence Hutton, C. Delmonico, H. Tissington, J. Wilson MacDonald, F. R. Stockton, Constant Mayer, Daniel D. Telford, Edward Moran, Harrison Millard, Thomas LeClear, Harry Beckett, and H. B. Dodworth.

“ . . . From Booth's Theatre to the Fifth Avenue Hotel the street was so packed towards midnight as to be almost impassable. A glare of light — from the theatre-porch, the torches of the Arcadian procession, and the street-lamps — illuminated the turbulent scene ; and presently, from the direction of Madison Square, a burst of Roman candles and rockets added to the brilliance and excitement of this memorable midnight hour. Miss Cushman entered a carriage opposite the stage-door, and amidst the cheers of the populace, and a tumult like that of the old-fashioned Fourth-of-July, was driven to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, where she presently appeared on the balcony and greeted the populace, while the Ninth Regiment Band performed a serenade, and the spaces and vistas of Madison Square were illumined with fireworks.”

Of this evening Miss Cushman in one letter wrote as follows : —

“ I acted eight times last week, besides that fearful affair after the play on Saturday. They say such a demonstration has never been made before, not even political. The number of people in front of the hotel must have been near twenty-five thousand, and it looked exactly like the Piazza del Popolo at the fireworks. I wish the children could have seen it ; it was a thing they should have seen, to remember in connection with their ‘ big mamma.’ You must tell them all about it, — how the whole big square in front of the Fifth Avenue Hotel was crammed with human beings. They could not move, they were so densely packed.

“ The sight in the theatre was magnificent. Then

128. East 16th St.

N. Y. 26 7/74

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your note of the 22^d inst. Expressing your desire & that of the members of your Club to do me honour on the last evening of my present Sojourn in New York. Allow me to thank you heartily for the kind and cordial manner in which you have conveyed to me this evidence of the esteem & regard of your associates.

It will give me much pleasure to meet you & them on the evening in question & to have the opportunity of expressing to them personally my high appreciation of their constant attention towards me.

Remaining, always &

Very faithfully I am obly. D

Wm. M. Thayer

Allyn S. Sullivan Esq

Pres. President Arcadian Club
52. Union Place

the ceremony at the end, which had made me sick all the week, for I was frightened lest I should forget what I had to say. Then I did not know what they were going to do, for when I would protest against this or that they would tell me it should not be, and yet I felt sure they would do what they pleased ; and so it turned out ; for, though I said that if they carried out their plan of white horses and escort with torches, etc., I would remain in the theatre all night, yet, when I got into my carriage at the private (carpenters') entrance on Twenty-third Street, expecting to go quietly to the hotel, where I had invited private friends to meet me, I found myself surrounded by a mass of human beings with torches and fireworks, rockets sent up all the way along up to the front entrance of the hotel, and a most indescribable noise and confusion. The corridors of the hotel were as crowded as the streets outside, and I could scarcely make my way along. Then, after a time, I had to make my appearance in the balcony, and then the shouting was something awful to hear. I was ready to drop with fatigue, so I could only wave my handkerchief to them, and went in, not getting to my bed before half past two."

Flattering as this demonstration was in one view, many regrets were felt and expressed by Miss Cushman's friends that she ever consented to give her countenance to it ; the feeling being in this, as in other similar cases, that the genius that could command such an ovation should hold itself above receiving it.

One week later Miss Cushman again appeared as *Lady Macbeth* in her farewell to Philadelphia. During

the evening she was several times called on, and received a profusion of magnificent and costly floral tributes. After the play she thus addressed the audience : —

“ LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, — Accustomed as I am to speak before you the impassioned words of genius, to give utterance to the highest ideas of the poet and the dramatist, I yet feel that my poor tongue must falter when it is called upon to speak, for itself alone, so sad a word as Farewell ; or when it tries to thank you fitly for all your kindness to me in the past, for all the honor you do me in the present. I have never, to the best of my knowledge and belief, altered a line of Shakespeare in my life ; but now, in taking my leave of the stage, I shall beg your permission to paraphrase him, the more fitly to express what I would say to you ; for it is his peculiar glory that none other in the whole range of literature has written words which apply more fully to every want of the soul, to every feeling of the heart. Let me say, then, partly in his words : —

‘ All my service

In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single business to contend
Against these honors, deep and broad, wherewith
You have ever loaded me. For those of old,
And the late dignities heaped up to them,
I rest your debtor.’

“ In the earlier part of my professional career Philadelphia was for some years my happy home. Here I experienced privately the greatest kindness and hospitality, publicly the utmost goodness and consideration ; and I never come to Philadelphia without the affection-

ate feeling that I am coming home, and to my family. This would make my Farewell too hard to be spoken, were it not that, though I am taking my leave of the stage, I have reserved to myself the right and the pleasant anticipation of appearing before you, where you have flattered me with the belief that my efforts are not unacceptable to you, at the reading desk. Until, at no distant day, we meet again there, — good-night, and all good be with you."

From Philadelphia Miss Cushman went to Trenton, Baltimore, and Washington, giving readings in each place, intending to proceed farther West, and finally to pass a portion of the season in California, where she had long desired to go ; but by the time she reached Cincinnati she was seriously ill. She was forced to change her plans, and relinquished that of seeing California with much regret. However, she was not long idle, for as soon as possible she resumed her readings, and after appearing in other places, was again in New York before Christmas.

In February, 1875, Miss Cushman made her last appearance in Albany, a few months more than thirty-eight years from the time when she had first appeared there, Oct. 11, 1836, when she acted *Lady Macbeth* to the *Macbeth* of the elder Booth. On this last occasion she read in Tweddle Hall ; and after three days went to Chicago, where she acted from the 15th to the 26th of the month ; and appeared on the following night in Cincinnati, where she filled an engagement of a week before going to St. Louis. She had a hard journey, and only reached the latter city in time to hurry to

the theatre, which she did in spite of her weariness and wretched health. She appeared there five nights, though it cost her days of illness ; but she preferred this to breaking an engagement. In view of what has been told of her malady, her sufferings, and her mental condition, all this eagerness to act can now be understood ; but it is not strange that at the time, when the public were in ignorance of the truth, many things were written and said which were unjust to Miss Cushman, and added their part to what she had to bear.

Later in the season she read to a house of three thousand persons in Philadelphia. It was during this winter that she saw Ristori as *Elizabeth* and *Marie Antoinette*. She thus wrote of her : "She is the greatest female artist I have ever seen. Such perfect nature, such ease, such grace, such elegance of manner, — such as befits a queen. . . . Her voice is the most lovely, and her mouth the most fascinating, after Titians, of any artist I ever saw."

In letters written at this time she speaks with doubt as to whether she shall be able to fulfil her engagements or not, but constantly expresses her determination to do so if possible. So the winter passed, and only those who were near her knew what a period of suffering it was, for the public could perceive few signs of it ; but once off the stage — in the anteroom, in travelling, in company, or alone — her "enemy," as she termed her disease, was omnipresent.

Finally, on May 15, she made her last appearance in Boston. During her engagement, which was at the Globe Theatre, she had assumed her usual rôles, and

now, as before, made her farewell as *Lady Macbeth*. We have given, in the first chapter of this book, the programme of her first night in public: we now give that of the last.

THE GLOBE THEATRE PROGRAMME.

Proprietor and Manager *Arthur Cheney.*
Stage Manager and Director *D. W. Waller.*

This evening

MISS CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN

will impersonate her celebrated rôle of

LADY MACBETH,

assisted by

MR. D. W. WALLER AS MACBETH.

Immediately after the performance, MISS CUSHMAN will be presented with a testimonial given by a number of her friends, on which occasion the presentation address will be delivered by MR. CURTIS GUILD.

SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 15, 1875,

last appearance on any stage of

MISS CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN,

supported by

MR. D. W. WALLER,

when will be performed Shakespeare's sublime Tragedy of

MACBETH.

Duncan	Mr. J. C. Dunn.
Malcolm	{ Mr. Lin Harris.
Donalbain } His Sons	
	{ Miss Wilkes.

Macbeth	} Generals in the King's Army	{	Mr. D. W. Waller.
Banquo			Mr. C. P. Fyffe.
Macduff	} Noblemen of Scotland . . .	{	Mr. G. B. Waldron.
Lenox			Mr. R. B. Darcie.
Rosse			Mr. Stuart Clarke.
Fleance, Son to Banquo			Miss Portia Albey.
Siward, Earl of Northumberland, General of the English Forces			Mr. S. Howard.
Seyton, an Officer attending on Macbeth .			Mr. J. P. Deuel.
Wounded Officer			Mr. W. A. Sands.
Porter			Mr. R. Charles.
First Apparition			Miss Lizzie Queen.
Second Apparition			Miss Addie Vankenish.
Third Apparition			Miss Pelby.
First Officer			Mr. Geo. Connor.
Second Officer			Mr. John Taylor.
First Murderer			Mr. J. Pitman.
Second Murderer			Mr. T. B. Francis.
Physician			Mr. C. Pierson.
First Witch			Mr. E. Coleman.
Second Witch			Miss Annie Hayes.
Third Witch			Mr. J. H. Connor.
Lady Macbeth			Miss Cushman.
Gentlewoman			Miss Athena.
Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Attendants, etc., by the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Company.			

The following account of the evening is from the *Boston Daily Advertiser*. It was a far more quiet affair than that in New York, but was a heartfelt testimonial of respect to Miss Cushman and of pride in her great achievements :—

“The scene at the Globe Theatre on Saturday evening was one that will remain long in the memories of those present, and as an occasion of great pleasure and also one that excited sentiments of regret that America’s greatest tragic actress had for the last time appeared in

the characters which she has been wont to assume. The theatre presented a fine appearance when the curtain was rung up for the performance of 'Macbeth,' the play selected by Miss Cushman for her farewell to the stage, and among the vast audience many gentlemen might have been seen who have not been familiar with the theatres of the last two decades. There were among those present representatives of the best of Boston's social, mercantile, and professional circles, and few public gatherings have better represented its culture and refinement.

"Miss Cushman, on her appearance, was greeted with prolonged applause, which was often repeated in the course of the play. At the conclusion of the last act, a selection of national airs was performed by the orchestra, the audience remaining to participate in the closing exercises. When the curtain was raised again, the stage presented the appearance of a drawing-room, and in its centre stood a gilt table upon which rested a floral crown with laurel wreath. Upon either side were placed bronze statuettes of Mercury and Fortune, about thirty inches high, and resting upon handsomely carved pedestals. Other floral decorations were arranged about the stage. After a moment's pause, Mr. Cheney entered from the left, leading Miss Cushman, whom he briefly presented.

"Mr. Curtis Guild then addressed Miss Cushman as follows :—

"*Miss Cushman, and Ladies and Gentlemen,*—The retirement from the dramatic profession of one who has so long been recognized as one of its most distin-

guished representatives, and who has done so much to elevate dramatic art, is in itself an event of more than ordinary moment. But when it occurs here, in the native city of the artist, and among those who have followed her from the commencement of her eventful career with hope and admiration, and claimed her as our own with pride at its culmination, it is felt that the occasion should not be permitted to pass without an attempt to express, in the most decided manner, the feelings of your many friends, who deem it a privilege to do you honor. Now that you are about to cast aside the robes of the artist forever ; to abdicate, not resign, the dramatic sceptre of the American stage, — for who is to wield that which you have so long swayed as queen? — now that you are to close your eventful and successful career with a fame honorably won and name untarnished, — you that have “outstripped all praise and made it halt behind you,” — it is not surprising that every true lover of dramatic art hastens to do eager homage, and that hosts of warm and hearty friends should press forward for the last hand-grasp of her whom they honor and respect.

“We cannot part with the great actress of our time but with emotion and tender regard. We remember the many hours of intellectual enjoyment for which we are indebted to her ; how the characters of the great bard, by the potent mystic wand of her creative genius, have appeared to actually live before us, as we were thrilled with horror by the fierce ambition of the murderous wife of the Scottish Thane, or our hearts pulsated with pity for the wrongs of the noble and

abused queen of the bluff and bloody Henry, or beat with emotion for the gentle lovers of Verona. And what additional interest has been lent to one, at least, of those remarkable creations of the great Scottish novelist, by a portraiture of character that shall ever live, while the history of dramatic art is chronicled, as one of the most wonderful and impressive ever presented upon the dramatic stage. It may truthfully be said, after witnessing your impersonations, yours is

“The spell o’er hearts
Which only acting lends, —
The youngest of the sister Arts,
Where all their beauty blends.
For ill can Poetry express
Full many a tone of thought sublime ;
And Painting, mute and motionless,
Steals but a glance of time ;
But, by the mighty Actor brought,
Illusion’s perfect triumphs come, —
Verse ceases to be airy thought,
And Sculpture to be dumb.”

“The player’s profession, we well know, from the earliest days, when in Greece it was held honorable and in Rome a despised vocation, has been assailed by fierce opponents. The great poet of our time himself, we read in the “Annals of the English Stage,” came into the world when the English portion of it was ringing with the denunciations of Archbishop Grindal against the profession which the child in his humble cradle at Stratford-upon-Avon was about to ennoble forever. We need not, however, go back as far as Shakespeare’s time to cite the fierce opposition

that dramatic art has encountered, or enumerate the obstacles that the dramatic artist must overcome. The discouragements in the thorny path of the profession may well make genius, even when accompanied by resolution, almost shrink from attempting it. Let us remember, however, that the art has been sanctioned by the great, befriended by the good, and supported by the people ; and, moreover, bear in mind that in this profession, whose members are in the full blaze of public observation and scrutiny, who are too often censured without reason or condemned without excuse, who are too frequently judged as a class for the errors of individuals, — those who *do* pass the fiery ordeal unscathed, who stand before us the real representatives of the dramatic profession, deserve from us our garlands as the exponents of a great and glorious art ; and, upon the present occasion, more than that, — the high regard that genius, combined with nobleness of mind and purity of character, exacts from all true and honest hearts. We have beheld with pride, in our modern Athens, the laurels awarded our warriors, the bays bestowed upon our poets, and our scholars and orators

“ Win the wreath of fame
And write on memory’s scroll a deathless name.”

And with equal exultation is it that we contemplate the addition that has been made to that brilliant circle of dramatic lights which counts in its constellation a Garrick, a Kemble, and a Siddons, of our own American luminary which sparkles with equal brilliancy to that of any of its great associates. • We come here to-night to

accord that homage which genius does not ask, but commands; to give you, not evidence of popularity, — mere popularity which is as the brightness of the passing meteor or the fleeting splendors of the rainbow, — but to express an appreciation of genius and the kind regard of genuine friendship. As the humble instrument of those who have honored me with this pleasing but difficult task, I am aware that their sentiments have been but imperfectly expressed; but in asking you to accept, in the name of your friends in this your native city, this evidence of their regard, I know I express their feelings in saying, “the greatest is behind;” for beyond this comparatively trifling token of esteem of your merits as an artist, is a friendship which, though death may sever, time shall not destroy. And in conclusion let me say, that though you may now pass from the mimic stage, distant be the day when your exit shall be made from the great stage on which we men and women all are merely players; though you may not have our hands in future before the curtain, they will still cordially grasp yours in the social circle which you adorn as modestly as you have upheld the dramatic art worthily and honorably. And now, when we depart, and when

“ Fallen is the curtain, the last scene is o’er,
The fav’rite actress treads the stage no more,”

we shall each and all of us remember that though

“ Many the parts you played, yet to the end
Your best were those of sister, lady, friend.”

“When Miss Cushman could sufficiently master the emotions which controlled her, she replied in the following terms : —

“The less I deserve,
The more merit lies in your bounty.”

“GENTLEMEN, — Your unexpected kindness deprives me of all words in which to thank you, and the few I can find will be but poor and feeble expressions of what I feel. But I would beg you to believe all that the heart prompts, as my deep and earnest appreciation of the honor you have done me. It is especially grateful because it comes to me here, in my own native city, and at the hands of those who, from the beginning to the end of my career, from my first appearance on the stage to my last appearance, have been truly

“Brothers, friends, and countrymen.”

In leaving the stage finally, it has always been my intention to make my last appearance in Boston ; and this suggests to me a little explanation, which, with your permission, I would like to make on this occasion. It has been implied, if not declared, and very often repeated in the newspapers throughout the country, that I should not have appeared again upon the stage after the great ovation which was paid to me in New York. At least, so the gentlemen of the press decided ; and many comments have been made upon me, in the papers, derogatory to my dignity as a woman and my position as an artist. I have passed on, in the even tenor of my way, little regarding, on my own account, these would-be censors and judges ; but it seems to me

proper that I should explain to *you*, in whose esteem I have a long-vested interest which must not be endangered without a strong and earnest protest on my part, that if my last engagement in New York was announced as my farewell to the stage, it was done by no act or will or word of mine. I had no such intention; indeed, I could not have had, for I had already made many other engagements for the season, which I have been endeavoring to fulfil, concluding, as was always my dearest wish, here in my own city of Boston, which I have always dearly loved, and where I had rather have been born than on any other spot of the habitable globe. I hope I have not tired your patience, but I could not rest without endeavoring to remove even the shadow of a shade which might cloud the perfect harmony between me and my public, who I hope and trust will accept this explanation from me. Looking back upon my career, I think I may, "without vainglory," say that I have not, by any act of my life, done discredit to the city of my birth.'

"Then, turning to the gentlemen of the committee of presentation, Miss Cushman continued: —

" 'So now, with a full but more free heart, I revert to you. To this last beautiful manifestation of your good will towards me, and to all who have so graciously interested themselves to do me this honor, I can but say, —

" More is their due
Than more than all can pay."

" 'Believe me, I shall carry away with me in my retirement no memory sweeter than my associations

with Boston and my Boston public. From my full heart, God bless you, and Farewell ! ” ”

After leaving Boston Miss Cushman read a few times in Western New York, and, on June 2, in Easton, Pennsylvania, after which I find no record of any public appearance. She then went to Lenox, Massachusetts, to superintend the fitting up of a house which she had purchased there. She found it best to leave Newport as the summer advanced, when the change from the sea-shore to the mountain air was beneficial to her. During this, her last summer at Newport, she was very ill, and when at last she revived sufficiently to go to Lenox, the bracing air acted like a charm upon her, restoring her to a certain degree of strength. Miss Stebbins thus speaks of Miss Cushman's plans regarding this new home : —

“ The pleasure and enjoyment she found in this small spot were delightful to see ; all its appointments were of a simple, homely kind, which added the charm of contrast to the elegant attractions of her Newport home. She brought with her there the same simplicity of taste and adaptability to her surroundings which made for her a home wherever she might be. She always enjoyed a return to the modest housekeeping of her early days, when Sallie and herself used to rough it so contentedly together. Everything interested her, on the small scale as on the large one ; her mind was busy, active, suggestive, and full of purpose and energy. She had no room for petty cares or trivial conventionalities ; she *made* her surroundings suitable and appropriate, and where she was, no one ever thought of anything else.

The little place would have been as complete in its way as the larger one, if her life had been spared ; but she was only permitted to enjoy a few days of it at this time, and again, later in the season, a few weeks, after a long and severe illness at Newport, which for a time seemed to make it doubtful if she might ever see it again."

CHAPTER XI.

1875-1876.

MISS CUSHMAN still cherished a hope of finding some alleviation of her malady, and decided to put herself under a new mode of treatment ; for that purpose she went to Boston in October, 1875, and established herself at the Parker House. She suffered terribly, but she bore up bravely ; saw her friends, and interested herself in literary matters and subjects of general interest. Those who saw her frequently knew by the changes in her face that she was in pain ; but she seldom mentioned her health, and when she did, gave as few words as possible to it. Until within two days of her death she wrote to her family in Newport each day. Some of her letters were very cheerful, and even as late as February 3 she spoke of her going to California as a future possibility. The day before Christmas she wrote : —

“This is not the greeting you should have for your Christmas ; but it is better you should know exactly where I am, and that we may have to defer the celebration of our Christmas to another and happier day. Just feel as though to-morrow was any common day, — for is not Christ here to us every day? And we will show our belief in this by trying to have faith and trust,

and make the celebration of it when that trust and faith are borne out and justified by time ! I grieve for you, dear, more than for myself, though I am a dreadful baby over my pain. It is very hard for you ; but the hard places must come in our lives, and perhaps we should not know how to enjoy the pleasures, but for the corresponding glooms of the pains of life. Keep up a good heart. You are loved and thought of as you *would* be, and that must give you courage for the battle which is before you as before us all ! ”

On Christmas day she again wrote : —

“The doctor is very hopeful, and says I am better. When I hear him talk I am ashamed that I give way under pain and cause such suffering to those I love ; but I cannot help it. It is beyond me, and those who love me must bear with me ; and if ever I get well I will repay them with interest in mirthfulness and joy until they shall wonder at the merry old woman ! ”

Her friends, however, were very despondent, and soon after the New Year, 1876, she was very low. She then gave minute directions for her funeral services, and her burial in the lot which she had purchased at Mount Auburn, — a spot which she loved because it commanded a view of Boston. After this time she again rallied, and even seemed to others to be positively better for a time. On January 27, after hearing of the sorrow of a friend, she wrote : —

“Ah, I am ashamed of the outcry I have made over mere physical pain, when the world is so full of ‘cark-ing care,’ which corrodes the soul ! God forgive me for fretting and complaining. I have not known what

else to do, and impotence is *my* curse and cross. Ah, please his infinite mercy that I am ever *well* again, will we not be happy and good, and love him more and more every day?"

Finally, after this season of apparent mending, on Feb. 12, 1876, while walking in the corridor of the hotel, she took a cold, pneumonia ensued, and six days later all was over. She did not suffer pain at last, neither did she realize what she was passing through. The evening before her death she wished to have Lowell's poem of "Columbus" read to her, and when the reader hesitated Miss Cushman supplied the word or line with perfect clearness. This incident suggested the following lines, signed "C. T. E." —

"For wast not thou, too, going forth alone
To seek new land across an untried sea?
New land, — yet to thy soul not all unknown,
Nor yet far off, was that blest shore to thee.

"For thou hadst felt the mighty mystery
That on man's heart and life doth ever rest,
A shadow of that glorious world to be,
Where love's pure hope is with fruition blest.

"Thine was a conflict none else knew but God,
Who gave thee, to endure it, strength divine:
Alone with him the wine-press thou hast trod,
And Death, his angel, seals the victory thine.

"The narrow sea of death thou now hast passed;
The mist is lifted from the unseen land;
The voyage ends, the shining throng at last
Meet thee with welcome on the heavenly strand."

Thus Charlotte Cushman passed from life in all her fortitude to hope and to bear. Doubtless, had she known that the hour was at hand she would still have been calm and brave; perhaps in those last unconscious hours bright visions waited on her passing spirit, and as so often heretofore she had called them up in imagination, now in truth might she have said, —

“Saw you not, even now, a blessed troop
 Invite me to a banquet; whose bright faces
 Cast thousand beams upon me, like the sun?”

.

On February 21, for an hour before the funeral, the public was admitted to the room in which she lay. The funeral was in King's Chapel, and the ceremonies were very simple. Many beautiful flowers were sent from far and near, symbols of the sweet memories of her which her friends and associates cherished.

All over the country the papers bore witness to the general feeling of loss occasioned by her death, and all united in awarding her that enviable fame which belongs alone to the great men and women who rise to their heights through their own merits and labors, a fame in which she can never be superseded in the history of the American drama, and one which should be a guiding star and an inspiring force to those who seek to follow where she led.

Some of the tributes paid her at this time are copied here. William Winter wrote: —

“There is something so awfully impressive in the vanishing of a great genius and a great force of noble

intellect and character out of this world, that reverence must pause before the spectacle, no less in humanity than sorrow. The historian of our time will review many important and significant lives, and will lay the laurel upon many a storied tomb ; but he will honor no genius more stately or more singular than that which now sleeps in the coffin of Charlotte Cushman. . . . To the last she was an image of majesty. The pain that consumed her suffering body could never quell her royal spirit. She could look back upon a good life ; she was sustained by religious faith ; she felt upon her gray hair the spotless crown of honor ; she met death as she had met life, a victor ; and she has passed from the world with all the radiance of her glory about her, like sunset from a mountain peak, that vanishes at once into the heavens.

“The greatness of Charlotte Cushman was that of an exceptional, because grand and striking personality, combined with extraordinary power to embody the highest ideals of majesty, pathos, and appalling anguish. She was not a great actress merely, but she was a great woman. She did not possess the dramatic faculty apart from other faculties, and conquer by that alone ; but, having that faculty in almost unlimited fullness, she poured forth through its channel such resources of character, intellect, moral strength, soul and personal magnetism as marked her for a genius of the first order while they made her an irresistible force in art. When she came upon the stage she filled it with the brilliant vitality of her presence. Every movement that she made was winningly characteristic. Her least ges-

ture was eloquence. Her voice, which was soft or silvery, or deep and mellow, according as emotion affected it, used now and then to tremble, and partly to break, with tones that were pathetic beyond description. These were denotements of the fiery soul that smouldered beneath her grave exterior, and gave iridescence to every form of art that she embodied. Sometimes her whole being seemed to become petrified in a silent suspense more thrilling than any action, as if her imagination were suddenly enthralled by the tumult and awe of its own vast proportions." . . .

The following letter was written by Mr. Lawrence Barrett : —

"Charlotte Cushman is dead. Before the shock of this news has passed away it cannot be improper to recall to her professional brethren the great loss we sustain by this sudden departure. After a long life of toil, laden with years and honors, she sleeps at last. That crown which she has worn for so many years undisputed now lies upon a coffin beside which a whole nation will mourn. The world contained no greater spirit, no nobler woman. Her genius filled the world with admiration, and the profession which she adorned and ruled must long await her successor. This is not the place, nor is mine the pen, to write her history ; larger space and abler hands will see that duty performed. These lines are traced by one who loved her living, and weeps for her now dead. Her career is an incentive and an example to all the workers in our noble art. A woman of genius, industrious and religious, her best education was obtained within the circle of her calling. Almost

masculine in manner, there was yet a gentleness in her which only her intimates could know. The voice which crooned the lullaby of the *Bertrams* so touchingly came from a heart as gentle as infancy. To all who labor in the realms of art, and to my profession most especially, the loss of this day will be a severe one. Bigotry itself must stand abashed before the life of our dead Queen, whose every thought and act were given for years to an art which ignorance and envy have battled against in vain for centuries. To her, our Queen, we say : 'Peace and farewell ! We shall not look upon her like again.' "

Mrs. Julia Ward Howe ended her tribute to Miss Cushman thus : —

"No æsthetic crown is loftier than that of the artist who has worthily walked in this true majesty of life upon the scene, receiving at every step the tribute of grateful and admiring hearts.

"Our friend had this true crowning. When we recall her form and action, we must rehearse the lines of Elizabeth Browning : —

'Juno, where is now the glory
Of thy regal port and tread?
Will they lay, for evermore, thee
In thy straight, low, golden bed?
Will thy queendom all lie hid
Meekly under either lid?'

"But the crown of all crowns is that of *character*, and in this respect our friend's record does not belie her broad brow and generous smile. Laborious, faithful, affectionate, tender, her daily life fulfilled all that her



art-prophecies promised. Rich were they who dwelt within the cordial influence of her words and acts. Bright and sunny was the home which her presence illuminated. Distant friends turned towards her with loving memory, and those who needed and deserved friendship found it in her.

“So let our tributes to her memory be *heart tributes* all. She loved much, served much, earned by hard work a noble reputation, and has left an example in which her race is enriched.”

In the autumn of 1880 a monument was placed over the grave of Miss Cushman, at Mount Auburn, by her nephew, Mr. E. C. Cushman of Newport, Rhode Island.

This is a perfectly plain granite shaft, about thirty-three feet in height. It was erected with no ceremonies, and bears no inscription save the name of Charlotte Cushman.

No words written by another can give the full insight into Miss Cushman's nature that her own letters furnish, and Miss Stebbins has permitted the use of such letters as are wished for from her own biography of her friend.

Those which follow reveal much of her personal feeling and her mode of reasoning, and give certain experiences in her own graphic and forceful manner. The first quotations are extracts from her letters to a young friend who was afterwards successful as an actress, and played in both England and America.

CHAPTER XII.

LETTERS.

“I SHOULD advise you to get to work ; all *ideal* study of acting, without the *trial* or opportunity of trying our efforts and conceivings upon others, is, in my mind, lost time. Study while you act. Your conception of character can be formed while you read your part, and only practice can tell you whether you are right. You would, after a year of study in your own room, come out unbenefited, save in as far as self-communion ever must make us better and stronger ; but this is not what you want just now. *Action* is needed. Your vitality must in some measure work itself off. You must suffer, labor, and wait, before you will be able to grasp the true and the beautiful. You dream of it now ; the intensity of life that is in you, the spirit of poetry which makes itself heard by you in indistinct language, needs *work* to relieve itself and be made clear. I feel diffident about giving advice to you, for you know your own nature better than any one else can ; but I should say to you, Get to work in the best way you can. All your *country* work will be wretched : you will *faint* by the way ; but you must rouse your great strength and struggle on, bearing patiently your cross on the way to your crown ! God

bless you and prosper your undertakings. I know the country theatres well enough to know how utterly alone you will be in such companies ; but keep up a good heart ; we have only to do well what is given us to do, to find heaven. . . .

“ I think if you have to wait for a while it will do you no harm. You seem to me quite frantic for immediate work ; but teach yourself quiet and repose in the time you are waiting. With half your strength I could bear to wait and labor with myself to conquer *fretting*. The greatest power in the world is shown in conquest over self. More life will be worked out of you by fretting than all the stage-playing in the world. . . .

“ I was exceedingly pleased to hear such an account of your first appearance. You were quite right in all that was done, and I am rejoiced at your success. Go on ; persevere. You will be sure to do what is right ; for your heart is in the right place, your head is sound, your reading has been good. Your mind is so much better and stronger than any other person’s whom I have known enter the profession, that your career is plain before you.

“ But I will advise you to remain in your native town for a season, or at least the winter. You say you are afraid of remaining among people who know you. Don’t have this feeling at all. You will have to be more particular in what you do, and the very feeling that you cannot be indifferent to your audience will make you take more pains. Besides this, you will be at home, which is much better for a time ; for then at first you do not have to contend with a strange home

as well as a strange profession. I could talk to you a volume upon this matter, but it is difficult to write. At all events, I hope you will take my counsel and remain at home this winter. It is the most wretched thing imaginable to go from home a novice into such a theatre as any of those in the principal towns.

"Only go on and work hard, and you will be sure to make a good position. With regard to your faults, what shall I say? Why, that you will try hard to overcome them. I don't think they would be perceived, save by those who perhaps imagine that your attachment for me has induced you to join the profession. I have no mannerisms, I hope; therefore any imitation of me can only be in the earnest desire to do what you can do, as well as you can. Write to me often; ask of me what you will; my counsel is worth little, but you shall command it if you need it."

The following letter, written from Rome in 1862, gives the religious views of Miss Cushman, in her own words:—

"To-morrow will be the last day of the year! I am glad when a winter is over, though sad to think I am so much nearer to the end. The days fly by so rapidly; the Saturdays when I must post come round so soon! I stand sometimes appalled at the thought of how my life is flying away, and how soon will come the end to all of this probation, and of how little I have done or am doing to deserve all the blessings by which I am surrounded. But that God is perfect, and that my love for him is without fear, I should be troubled in the thought that I am not doing all I should, *in* this

sphere, to make myself worthy of happiness in the next. Do you quite believe in angels with feather wings and flowing draperies and perfect beauty, and a heaven in the clouds? or do you believe that man, a little lower than the angels, animated by the 'heat spark,' wears out his physical in the improvement of his moral, and that this 'heat spark' then returns to the original centre of all, to be again given out, through its own purification, helping thus to leaven the whole mass, and so doing God's work! — or what do you believe? You say you 'feel the need of a Saviour!' Do you think *Christ* more your Saviour, except that he has been the founder of a creed which has been a sign and symbol for so many who *needed* a sign and symbol? Do you believe that God was more the Father of Christ than he is of you? Do you need any mediator between you and your Father? Can the Saviour Christ help you more than the Saviour Conscience? I don't believe in *Atheism*; so you see one may doubt even disbelief; but I should be glad to know what your creed is, if you put it into any form. Creeds invented by man may and do find echoes, as we find around us those who can give us better counsel than we can find for ourselves in ordinary matters; how much more, then, in those which are purely spiritual! But *creeds are creeds*, after all; and whether propounded by Jesus, or any other of *woman born*, they are simply scaffoldings which surround the temple, and by which different thinkers mount to their distinct and separate entrances. I find it possible to go to any church and find God! A good and earnest man,

though a *self-elected* priest, who leads a pure and noble life, who works for the good of others rather than his own gratification, who leads me to think higher and better things, is my Saviour ; all great, good, noble, high aspirations *save me*. Vainglory in myself or my doings, self-assertion, pride, are often but the effects of education ; and though they may be and are the clogs of flesh around me, they cannot prevent me from seeing God any and every where, and they cannot prevent me from being *saved, if* I will ! Oh, this question is so difficult, so hard ; and yet, if we can prove by our lives that we *love* God in our neighbor, it is so easy ! We are asked by all believers to love God, and this is *all*. If we love, we cannot wound ! God is perfect ; we cannot hurt him as we do one another, for he sees in and around and through, and the *motive* is the hurt. I believe that some of the purest lives are among those whom we call *Deists*, — who believe in God, but not in revealed religion. No one can doubt *a cause*, and there must have been a *first cause*, and whether we call it God, or nature, or *law of the universe*, it amounts to the same thing ; and, trust me, every human being believes in a God. For me, I believe in all things good coming from God, in all forms, in all ways ; my faith is firm in him and his love. I believe in instincts marvellously. I doubt any power to take from me the love of God, and I would guard particularly against the evil effects of injudicious or careless education for myself or others. Original sin is the excess or weakness or folly of parents, which entails upon us evils which we have to

combat, and struggle harder in consequence of ; hence the necessity of each human being striving to lead a pure life, a life of unselfishness, a life of devotion to — well — doing everything a human being can do for the largest good of all.

“ A devotion which drives one to a nunnery, to a life of self-seclusion, of prayer *actual*, and nothing else, does not seem to me *devotion* such as God needs and wants ; and yet it may be that this example is also necessary in God’s world, and each man or woman may be doing His work ! But I must not write on such topics. I am not sufficiently clear in my expression to help anybody ; and I only intended at first to reply to the last sentence of your letter, in which you spoke of your ‘ need of a Saviour,’ and of your going to such or such a church. Well, it matters very little. All thinking human beings (women especially) have to pass through all these thinkings. The only thing to be guarded against is the narrowing influence of Mrs. Grundy. Think *in*, but be sure also to think *out*. Many young people are apt to jump into one of these enclosures, and then, for *fear*, are afraid to jump or crawl out, — not from fear of God, but fear of the humans around them ! Don’t suffer yourself to be narrowed in your thinkings. If you do, it is because of some part of your mind not having been healthily exercised, and thus the restraint day by day will cramp you more. I don’t like too much this pride of intellect, any more than I do the idea of any and every man being able to be a *priest* simply because he *chooses* that as his vocation. There are many priests who

never see churches, as there are many devils within the fold ! Did you ever read very thoughtfully ‘*Spiridion*’ (George Sand) ? She was in this coil when she wrote it, and, being greatly imaginative, of course the book is very wide of the mark for many ; but it is possible to get something from it in spite of its mysticism.

“ I go to the English Church here, because I think it right to go somewhere, and I cannot understand Italian well enough to follow *their* preaching, though the earnestness and intensity and eloquence of the priests often stirs me to my soul, in spite of the trammels of language. Therefore I go to the English Church ; and I observe their observances, because I think it is unkind, by any resistance on my part when I am among them, to raise doubts or questions or remarks when it is unnecessary and productive of no good result. But their scaffolding is no more for me, and does not influence me any more, than that of the Catholic or the Presbyterian. God saw the creatures he created ; he knew their capabilities ; he will judge us each by our light. The child shut away from light is not answerable for its blindness. Education is the influences around our childhood, not merely books and school, but example, and we are only responsible according to our light. But we must not wilfully shut our eyes when we can be led into the light, which is to be tempered to our abilities ; only don’t condemn others because they do not see as we do, and we are not able to see with their eyes. Every human being who goes to sleep awakes believing in

God, whatever he may call it. There are more good *Deists* in the world than show themselves, and there is more pride than one wishes to see ; but education is to blame, not instinct, and so we have to go so far back to find the original plague-spot, that one is apt to sit down by the wayside in terror at the journey ! ”

CHAPTER XIII.

[The following paper has been written for this book by Mr. Wm. T. W. Ball, and is a valuable addition to the opinions of critics already quoted.

Many of the most flattering notices which have preceded this were written under the excitement which Miss Cushman's acting had produced, and before the influence of her personal magnetism had passed off; but when one who understands his subject as thoroughly as Mr. Ball does, can write with his enthusiasm regarding Miss Cushman so long after "the silver cord was loosed" and "the golden bowl broken," his praise is praise indeed. — C. E. C.]

It is a fact worthy of note that the most celebrated actors and actresses — the very brightest luminaries of the dramatic profession — in the outset of their careers upon the stage have had no conception of the peculiar bent of their genius, or whether, with the greatest effect and success, they were destined to wear the sock or the buskin. Many of the most famous comedians of our day have started out permeated with naught but tragic aspirations; while, on the other hand, some of the most noted tragedians, in after life, commenced as comedians. The brightest ornament of the American stage (Edwin Forrest) at one time cherished no higher ambition than to become a circus rider, and it is on

record that on one occasion he made a flying leap through a barrel of red fire, singeing his hair and eyebrows terribly.

It is unquestionably true, as the poet Cowper tells us, that

“God gives to every man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordained to fill.”

Of this truth there is a striking example in the professional life of Charlotte Cushman. The Supreme Power better knew her destiny and her great capacities than she did herself. The woman proposed a life on the lyric stage; the Deity disposed of the life as that of the grandest tragic actress which America, up to the present day, has produced. Becoming, from the force of unforeseen circumstances, unadapted for the career of a great songstress, Miss Cushman, instinctively as it were, following the bent of her genius, developed into the matchless actress. In the outset of her career upon the stage it was fortunate for Miss Cushman that she received a thorough schooling in all the intricate *minutiæ* of her profession, — a schooling which is as essentially necessary to the development of the actor and actress as are light and heat to the development of the flower. “Lowliness is young ambition’s ladder,” and Miss Cushman, with more ability, with more true genius, than all the fledgling *tragédiennes* of the present day put together, did not hesitate to commence on the very lowest round of her profession, in order the more securely to reach its topmost

height. No matter how much of native ability an aspirant for dramatic fame may possess, nor with how much of purely mimetic talent that aspirant may be endowed, it is nevertheless next to an impossibility that such an one can step from the drawing-room or the seminary on to the stage, and successfully contest for its honors with the matured, the cultivated, and the well-grounded artist. No woman who has graced the stage, within the present century at least — a century redolent of the genius of Sarah Siddons — was possessed of a greater capacity for such a feat, admitting for the moment its possibility, than Charlotte Cushman ; but the strength of her intellect caused her, when on the very threshold of her profession, not to ignore the fact that, recognized as her abilities even then were, there was something to be learned outside of mere declamation and the faculty of making a few startling “points.” On the contrary, she bore in mind that the fundamental necessity, the chief corner-stone, as it were, of the dramatic structure she was about to rear, should consist not of a superficial but of a thorough and absolute knowledge of the “business” and traditions of the stage. The drudgery of the profession must often have proved galling to a woman of the strength of intellect which Miss Cushman possessed, but, believing in its necessity, her way was thenceforth

“Like to the Pontick sea
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne’er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on.”

I have heard Miss Cushman say that in her early days upon the stage she had no especial predilection

for any one particular line of dramatic business. She was a firm believer, not alone in her own powers, but that her destiny was to make a name and fame. Her idea was (she was then a young woman, let it be borne in mind, of about one and twenty) that she would be equally good in tragedy and comedy. Those who remember her in the very plenitude of her strength, people who are competent to judge understandingly of dramatic representations, and possessed of the ability to analyze character and appreciate motives, will confess that Miss Cushman's comedy parts, charmingly as they were conceived, and abounding as they did in touches of tender grace, bore, in general, no comparison to her tragic assumptions. While she had a *penchant* for occasionally appearing in comedy down almost to her latest days on the stage, and notably as *Mrs. Simpson*, in John Poole's comedy of "Simpson & Co." in which she "stood up peerless," yet she herself was free to own that her highest achievements and most pronounced successes were made in Shakespearian tragedy.

It was in

"My salad days,
When I was green in judgment,"

and so long ago as 1837, that I first saw Miss Cushman play. It was at the Tremont Theatre, then under the management of that most accomplished actor and manager, Thomas Barry. The play was "Macbeth," and Miss Cushman was the *Lady*. 'T was a coincidence that this should have been the first as well as the last part which it was my good fortune to see her

perform. Even at this early period of her career on the stage, which up to this time had covered but three seasons, she is said to have given evidence of the dawning of that greatness which she ultimately achieved. I have heard good judges of acting say, and especially the late Edward D. Clarke, that while at this time she displayed great strength of intellect, and a faculty of firmly grasping the parts she undertook, that, nevertheless, her performances were, when tried by the standard of those of other actresses who had preceded her, crude and coarse. Even so late as 1843 it would appear that she had not developed that perfect finish as a tragic actress which later years brought, and there was color for the remark made by that highly accomplished actor, Macready, in his diary, under date of New York, October 23, of the year above mentioned: "The Miss Cushman, who acted *Lady Macbeth*, interested me much. She has to learn her art." But Macready recognized her abilities as beyond question; or otherwise, subsequently to this, he would not have invited her to play with him again in New York, and later in Boston, and still later to honor him by her support in England. During her stay at the Tremont Miss Cushman was cast for almost everything. She even played such "breeches parts," as they are termed, as *Henry*, in "Speed the Plough," and *Fortunato Falconi*, in the charming little drama, "Matteo Falconi." It was about this time that I saw her as *Madge Wildfire*, in the "Heart of Midlothian," a performance in which she was very effective. This was not Boucicault's "Jeanie Deans," but an older piece

founded on Sir Walter Scott's great novel. I can to this day distinctly remember Miss Cushman's singing the various snatches of old ballads with which the part abounds, and the entire rendition was one of strong melodramatic tendencies. Nothing could be more natural in after years than the transition from this part to that of *Meg Merrilies*, although in the one we had the fulness and the elasticity of youth, and in the other the simulation of almost tottering senility. Later in the season, when that delight of the juveniles, "The Forty Thieves," was produced for the holidays, Miss Cushman was the *Morgiana*, and her songs and duets with *Ganem* were invariably encored, while her dancing was well worth seeing. I have instanced this simply to show that in the study of her art Miss Cushman was thorough, and that she was well grounded in all its most minute particulars. In those days, if an aspirant had any dramatic instincts whatever, they were certain of being brought out, for then there was a school for acting; while now, more's the pity, legitimate acting, with but a few honorable exceptions — to such an extent has the public taste been perverted by the spectacular and meretricious drama — has become almost a lost art; and so much is such a state of things deplored by the worthies of the stage, that within a twelvemonth I have heard that well-graced actor, the Nestor of his profession, Mr. John Gilbert, deplore the fact that the tendencies of dramatic art were such that, in his opinion, five years hence it would be almost an impossibility to cast a standard tragedy or comedy, with due regard to its proper and complete representation.

It is a singular coincidence that the day upon which these lines are written (Dec. 20, 1881) is the fortieth anniversary of the production at the Tremont Theatre (Dec. 20, 1841) of Boucicault's ever popular comedy, "London Assurance," and Miss Cushman was the *Lady Gay Spanker*. The piece was well cast to the stock company. Gilbert was the *Sir Harcourt Courtley*; William Creswick, still on the stage in England, and the then leading man of the Tremont, was the *Charles Courtley*; that superb light comedian, J. M. Field, who will be remembered by theatre-goers of the present day, for his inimitable performance of *Hawkesley* in "Still Waters Run Deep," was the *Dazzle*; and the fine eccentric comedian, William F. Johnson, the *Mark Meddle*. The piece could not fail of having a grand representation with such a cast, but it was the general impression that neither Miss Cushman nor Mr. Gilbert were fully up to the requirements. Long afterwards, when I saw Miss Cushman play *Lady Gay*, and felt myself somewhat competent to judge in the matter, I made up my mind that the performance was a spasmodic one. It was good only in spots. It was heavy. The part is the embodiment of pure comedy, and should be made as light as thistledown. Miss Cushman's face and figure were greatly against her, and instead of floating through the part on the very top-sparkle of joyousness, she seemed to me constrained, severely serious, and even tragical, as compared in the performance with other actresses I have seen. The same remarks will apply to her *Constance* in "The Love Chase," and to the greater portion of

her *Juliana* in the "Honeymoon," though I am free to confess that in this latter part when she assumed her true position as the *Duchess Aranza*, there was a dignity and a majesty in her appearance and acting, which I never saw approached before or since.

At the close of this season Miss Cushman left Boston, and when next I saw her in that city, it was at the Melodeon, now the Gaiety Theatre, which had been fitted up as a temporary theatre by a Mr. Leander Rodney. This was in the fall of 1844. The season was a brief one, lasting, I think, but three weeks. The attraction was William Charles Macready. Miss Cushman was, of course, the principal female support, and during the season she appeared in such parts as *Queen Gertrude* in "Hamlet," *Lady Macbeth*, *Julie de Mortemar* in "Richelieu," *Mrs. Oakley* in "The Jealous Wife," *Emilia* in "Othello," *Goneril* in "King Lear," etc. This, it will be seen, was a broad range of characters, and eminently adapted to show the lady's versatility. That she had improved, and that greatly, since last she graced the Boston boards, was beyond a peradventure. I think her connection with Macready had much to do with this improvement; for she certainly could not have been associated with this most accomplished and scholarly artist, without appreciating, and, in fact, imbibing many of his ideas. In any event, she had become more subdued, and, as a consequence, more natural. Her *Gertrude* was the finest I ever saw, while her *Emilia* was something wonderful, indeed a new revelation. Never have I heard the great speech —

“The Moor’s abus’d by some most villanous knave,
Some base, notorious knave, some scurvy fellow : —
O, heaven, that such companions thou’dst unfold ;
And put in every honest hand a whip
To lash the rascal naked through the world,
Even from the east to the west,”

delivered with such emphasis of gesture and such grandeur of tone. At its close she “took the stage,” and she held it, too, being for the time the great central figure, in which all the others were merged. The look of withering scorn and contempt which she flung at *Iago* was the very sublimity of acting. But her whole performance was of a piece with this, while her death scene was very tender and pathetic. It will be remembered that in a strictly dramatic ratio, *Emilia* ranks as the fifth part in importance in the tragedy. *Othello*, *Iago*, *Cassio*, and *Desdemona* take precedence of it. In a stock company it is invariably assigned to the lady who plays what is termed, in the technicality of the stage, the “leading heavies.” The part possesses strong dramatic situations and abounds in telling speeches, that would in themselves carry any performance, no matter how ordinary, to a satisfactory conclusion. When I assert that it has been my good fortune to have seen Miss Cushman elevate the part to the first consideration in the presentation of the tragedy, an idea of her greatness in it may be readily conceived. Her *Goneril* was another strong piece of acting, and in it she made every line tell. It is an unsympathetic and thankless character to perform, but at Miss Cushman’s hands it received every consideration. I can

well remember the audiences which filled the Melodeon on the occasion of every performance during this brief though memorable season. There nightly were to be seen Longfellow, Lowell, and George S. Hillard; Thomas H. Perkins and Abbott Lawrence and the Otises and the Winthrops; Charles Sumner and Rufus Choate and the Curtises; while towering above all was the grand and imposing form of Daniel Webster. The very best classes of the community — its intellect as well as its wealth — were represented; and, I doubt, if since then such cultivated audiences ever assembled within the walls of a theatre in this city to honor the drama in the persons of its then foremost representatives.

From the close of this engagement till the fall of 1849, covering a period of five years, Miss Cushman was not again seen in Boston until her return fresh from her English triumphs, when she appeared at the Federal Street Theatre for a three weeks' engagement, under the management of Humphrey W. Bland. She brought with her, as her support, Mr. Charles W. Coudock, a most excellent actor, whose performances are still a delight to all who witness them. This engagement of Miss Cushman's was one continuous ovation, and the houses were crowded nightly. It was at this time that I first saw her in that lugubrious and tear-compelling piece, the "Misanthrope and Repentance," of the German Kotzebue, which is more familiar to American play-goers as "The Stranger." I had previously seen Charles Kean and his wife in this lachrymose drama (which has, I trust, been permanently

banished from the stage), and justly celebrated as Mrs. Kean was for her fine performance of *Mrs. Haller*, I incline to the belief that Miss Cushman was much her superior, and that her entire performance was more satisfying and much more effective. Miss Cushman wrought on every feeling which the audience possessed. Pathos, passion, remorse, repentance, maternal affection, were alike to her, and all were touched with a master hand and by the mighty inspiration of genius. So powerful was this performance, so impressive was it, so much did it touch the sensibilities of the auditors, that I have known ladies to be removed from the theatre in hysterics, and have seen strong-framed and strong-brained men weeping like children. Indeed, so much did Miss Cushman herself enter into the spirit of the part that I have, on more than one occasion, seen

“Cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks.”

There was a whole lifetime of wretchedness and woe in the two-and-a-half hours' performance, and when at last the curtain fell on it the intensity of the relief was most welcome. It is possible that in my day there may be as good a representative of this part as was Miss Cushman; but good or bad, I trust I may be spared the infliction of ever again being called upon to witness this most morbidly melancholy play. It was during this engagement that I saw Miss Cushman enact for the first time the character of *Ion* in the late Justice Talfourd's play of that name. This tragedy, so strictly classical as it is, has now scarce a foothold on the

stage. It was originally produced at Covent Garden Theatre, London, on the 26th of May, 1836, and Macready was the original *Ion*. Several years subsequent Miss Ellen Tree took up the part, and in a measure made it her own. For the present time the play may be looked upon as "too preachy," yet it has some strong dramatic situations, and the characters are boldly drawn. Of Macready's performance it was said by the author that "by the graces of beautiful elocution he beguiled the audience to receive the drama as belonging to a range of associations which are no longer linked with the living world, but which retain an undying interest of a gentler cast, as a thing which might have been; and then, by his fearful power of making the fantastic real, he gradually rendered the whole possible — probable — true!" This language could apply with equal justice to the performance of Miss Cushman. While her elocution was faultless, she invested her various scenes with so much that was life-like as, indeed, to make "the fantastic real." In looks she was the very part itself, and though I object to women unsexing themselves on the stage, there was so much to be commended in this entire performance of Miss Cushman as to completely overshadow what might be looked upon by many as a trivial matter. During this engagement Miss Cushman performed *Pauline* in "The Lady of Lyons," by no means a good piece of acting, and I think for the first time in this city, appeared as *Meg Merrilies*, — but of this I will speak hereafter. I feel somewhat astonished when I look back, in contemplating the amount of work which

Miss Cushman at this time would accomplish in the course of a night. Now, a single play, occupying a scant two hours and a half in representation, suffices for an entertainment, to witness which an inordinately large admission fee is charged. At prices nearly fifty per cent less than those which obtain at present, Miss Cushman has played, in one evening, *Queen Katherine* and *Mrs. Simpson*, or *Lady Macbeth* and *Juliana*! Of a certainty Miss Cushman was a great worker physically as well as mentally.

But I fear I should become wearisome did I dwell on all the parts which I have seen Miss Cushman play, and in general terms I will assume that, in the range of legitimate tragedy, there can be no doubt that her *Lady Macbeth* and *Queen Katherine* stand out in the boldest relief. Of these two parts it is safe to say that her *Queen Katherine* was the most finished performance. It was indeed "one entire and perfect chrysolite" with "no hinge or loop to hang a doubt upon." Certainly, so far as the stage of the present day is concerned, the part died with Miss Cushman. It is possible that the future has in store other worthy representatives of *Queen Katherine*, but I question if the equal (assuredly not the superior) of Miss Cushman will ever again be witnessed in it. The great charm of this glorious assumption was found in its evenness and perfect naturalness throughout. There was no overstraining for effect, and if there were times when an unusually strong point was made, it was made with such exquisite *finesse* that in no degree whatever did it overstep the modesty of nature. A familiar instance

of this will be recalled in the last scene of the second act of the play ("King Henry the Eighth"), wherein the Court, together with *Wolsey* and the Pope's legate, the *Cardinal Campeius*, are assembled for the purpose of adjudicating on the question of *Katherine's* divorce from the King. The *Queen* has made her noble plea to *Henry* for justice and delay until she can advise with her friends in Spain, when *Wolsey* interposes with the speech, —

" You have here, lady,
(And of your choice), these reverend fathers ; men
Of singular integrity and learning,
Yea, the elect of the land, who are assembled
To plead your cause. It shall be therefore bootless
That longer you desire the court ; as well
For your own quiet, as to rectify
What is unsettled in the King."

Campeius also takes up the question, saying,

" His grace
Hath spoken well, and justly : therefore, madam,
It 's fit this royal session do proceed ;
And that, without delay, their arguments
Be now produced and heard."

Miss Cushman, representing *Katherine* as looking upon *Wolsey* as her enemy, listened to his speech with a half contemptuous sneer, but to the words of *Campeius* she paid profound and deferential attention. At their conclusion she drew herself up to her extreme height and, swinging round so as to face *Wolsey*, — with flashing eye, extended arm, a grandeur of gesture befitting one who was

“A queen, — certain
The daughter of a king,”

and in a voice whose every tone was full of the majesty of command, — addressed him in the words

“Lord Cardinal, —
To you I speak,”

with such startling effect and vivid emphasis as to completely electrify her audience and to call forth the heartiest applause. The sudden transition from almost humbleness to imperious command was one of the finest things I have ever witnessed on the stage. I do not think that an actress of lesser note than Miss Cushman could have made so fine a point without its degenerating into clap-trap. In her case it was such a natural, such a womanly, yea, such a queenly outburst — the tones of the voice and the dignity of the action were so harmonious — that the brilliance of the point in no wise overshadowed the evenness or the exquisite finish with which the preceding and succeeding portions of the scene were portrayed. Equally fine was her reply to *Griffith*, just previous to her exit. She is departing the court when he apprises her that she is called back. She replies to him

“What need you note it? pray you keep your way:
When *you* are called, return.”

The emphasis on this last “you” was given with such an admixture of petulance, contempt, and even disgust that it invested her closing lines

“ Now, the Lord help,
They vex me past my patience ! — pray you, pass on :
I will not tarry ; no, nor ever more,
Upon this business, my appearance make
In any of their courts,”

with an impressiveness and a significance which they would not otherwise have obtained. Great as Miss Cushman unquestionably was in this scene, I none the less incline to the opinion that her finest work was found in her interview with the two *Cardinals* in the first scene of the third act, and in her death in the second scene of the fourth act. I have looked upon many a death scene on the stage as portrayed by Rachel and Ristori and the hosts of lesser lights, both male and female, but never saw anything more impressive than this of Miss Cushman's. I am not aware that the specific disease of which *Katherine* died has been made mention of by any of her historians. Miss Strickland speaks of her malady as an incurable disease. Miss Cushman's treatment of the death, strictly in accordance as it was with historical tradition, would seem to convey the idea that the decease was caused by consumption, and having this idea in view, the working up of the entire “business” of the scene was a marvellous piece of stage effect, in no degree inconsistent with nature. The dissolution was so gradual that, from the very opening of the scene, one entirely unfamiliar with the history of *Katherine* could not fail of being prepared for what was certain to ensue ; and when the culmination took place the impression left was so profoundly sad that tears became almost a

necessity to the audience as affording relief to the intense tension to which their sympathies were wrought. And in this respect the result was the direct opposite from that attained in the portrayal of *Mrs. Haller*.

I look upon the *Lady Macbeth* of Miss Cushman as a massive performance, as great in its way as is the *Othello* of Tommaso Salvini. I think it was more strongly imbued with the true Shakespearian spirit than was the representation of the same character by Mrs. Siddons, as handed down to us by tradition. This lady was in the habit of wearing a blond wig in the part, and of making of this sternest of women, on the evidence of Thomas Campbell, a delicate beauty. Indeed, in her "Remarks on the Character of Lady Macbeth," Mrs. Siddons says: "In this astonishing creature one sees a woman in whose bosom the passion of ambition has almost obliterated all the characteristics of human nature; in whose composition are associated all the subjugating powers of intellect, and all the charms and graces of personal beauty. You will probably not agree with me as to the character of that beauty; yet, perhaps this difference of opinion will be entirely attributable to the difficulty of your imagination disengaging itself from that idea of the person of her representative which you have been so long accustomed to contemplate. According to my notion, it is of that character which I believe is generally allowed to be most captivating to the other sex — fair, feminine, nay, perhaps even fragile, —

'Fair as the forms that, wove in Fancy's loom,
Float in light visions round the poet's head.'

It is very certain that Miss Cushman did not agree with her famous prototype as to the character of the beauty of *Lady Macbeth*, for in her delineation of the part she appeared almost in her own proper person, which I must be permitted to say, albeit grand and imposing, had no vestige of what was fair, feminine, or fragile. In person Miss Cushman was as robust as her performance of *Lady Macbeth* was masculine, and she governed her pliant lord, who was so "infirm of purpose," by the force of a superior will rather than by blandishments or personal attractions. There was one little touch in Miss Cushman's embodiment of the character that, so far as my experience goes, was entirely overlooked by other actresses. This was in the only interview (Act I. Scene 6) the lady has with "the gracious *Duncan*." All the other *Lady Macbeths* that I have seen invariably met the *King* in a fawning and cringing manner. Miss Cushman alone, while paying due homage to *Duncan* as her sovereign, still preserved the dignity of her standing; and, though playing the hostess to perfection, she never for a moment permitted her audience to lose sight of the fact that socially and by birth she was the peer of the King, — being, as she was, the granddaughter of a sometime King of Scotland, Kenneth IV., killed, in 1003, fighting against Malcolm II. who was the grandfather of *Duncan*. Aside from this I cannot call to mind that Miss Cushman invented any new points in her delineation of the character, which was, with this exception, of the traditional order, except a very delicate bit of business at the close of the reading of the letter of her husband

(Act I. Scene 5), wherein she pertinently suited the action to the word and the word to the action by laying it to her heart, in putting the missive into her bosom, instead of holding it in her hand as has been customary with all the other representatives of the part I have seen. I have spoken of the masculine element which pervaded her interpretation of this part ; but after all, this was at times relieved by the loving tenderness and solicitude of the wife, which occasionally asserted itself above the ambition of the woman. Particularly noticeable was this in the second scene of the third act, where the reading of the lines —

“How now, my lord? Why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making?
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on?”

and in the subsequent speech —

“Come on,
Gentle my lord; sleek o’er your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial ’mong your guests to-night.”

And then too in the Banquet scene, what a whole history was there conveyed in her pronouncing the line —

“You lack the season of all natures, sleep,”

to the man who had murdered sleep and as a consequence should sleep no more ! In the Murder scene she was superlatively great. She made all that was to be made of that one little piece of filial affection which she displays when, in speaking of the assassination of *Duncan*, she says —

“Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done ’t ;”

while the tones of her voice in speaking the words —

“Infirm of purpose,
“Give me the daggers!”

and her action in grasping them, were as those of a fury. Then too on her return from having blood-smeared

“The faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt,”

what contempt there was as she showed her hands, red with the blood of *Duncan*, and almost hissed out the lines —

“My hands are of your color : but I shame
To wear a heart so white !”

Her exit at the close of this scene was very powerful as she dragged — I may say almost lifted — the broken-down *Macbeth* from the stage. To be sure all this was art, but it was the acme of art. It was that species of art which finds its counterpart in nature. Miss Cushman obtained a well deserved notoriety for her Sleep-walking scene, and of a verity it was a superb piece of acting. I think, however, that in this particular instance she was outdone by Madame Ristori, who in this portrayal struck me as having reached the very outermost limit of dramatic conception and execution. Taken as a whole, however, it is not unnatural to assume that Miss Cushman's delineation of *Lady Macbeth* could never be improved upon ; and in this connection I will say that the late Edward L. Davenport, next to Edwin Forrest the most accomplished of native actors, told me that Mac-

ready (the best *Macbeth* who ever graced the boards) informed him that Miss Cushman's performance of *Lady Macbeth* was a most consummate piece of art, so powerful in its nature, so subtile in its conception as to make him feel, when on the stage with her, that he was less than a creature of secondary consideration, — in truth a mere thing of naught.

If I have proved too far extended in my remarks upon these two characters, my excuse must be that I consider them the greatest of Miss Cushman's purely legitimate triumphs.

I hold Miss Cushman — barring the Balcony scene, in which I must confess she was eclipsed by Signor Rossi — to be the best *Romeo* I ever saw. Best, because as a woman she knew what love was, and as a woman knew how love should be made. She wooed *Juliet* as she herself would be wooed, and hence her performance had no element of cold formality in it, but was impulsive and ardent, while constrained within the limits of a modest and well-bred discretion. To the credit of Miss Cushman be it said, she was the first who ever gave us a version of "Romeo and Juliet" in any way approaching the completeness with which the tragedy emanated from the mind of the great master. The restorations of the text which she made were as judicious as they were absolutely necessary to a complete representation. By those restorations the glorious light comedy part of *Mercutio* was rounded to fulness. *Escalus*, the Prince of Verona, was reinstated, and the cause of the family feud which existed between the *Capulets* and *Montagues* was made appar-

ent to all. It was at the National Theatre, Boston, that I saw Miss Cushman play *Romeo*, the *Juliet* being a Miss Anderton. It is needless to say that the performance was an unequivocal success, and as a whole wellnigh faultless. But I had the same objection to it that I found with *Ion*, to wit the needlessness of the lady's unsexing herself. There were certainly female characters enough in her *répertoire* to suffice for the satisfaction of the most exacting audiences, and hence I never could see the necessity of her wearing the breeches.

I have intimated that in the delineation of comedy Miss Cushman was by no means so successful as in her portrayal of the sterner shades of humanity. This fact I think she recognized herself, for in the latter years of her career she almost completely abandoned this peculiar walk of the drama. Her *Rosalind* and *Beatrice* were at the best but heavy assumptions, and she was wanting in that exuberance and buoyancy of spirit which made the performances of Mrs. George H. Barrett, Mrs. Charles Kean, and Mrs. Julia Bennett Barrow so exceptionally fine. Her *Portia* was great only in its declamatory portions. In the Trial scene she was perfection, and her delivery of the great Plea for Mercy dwells in my mind as a superior piece of dramatic reading, never excelled by that best of Shakespearian readers, Frances Kemble Butler.

Great as Miss Cushman was as a legitimate actress, I think her greatness went a step beyond when she entered the field of melodrama; and I think moreover that her fame as an exponent of *Meg Merrilies* and

Nancy (in the adaptation of Dickens's "Oliver Twist") will live long after her memory as a *Lady Macbeth* and a *Queen Katherine* is forgotten. Her *Meg* was of course the creation of Charlotte Cushman, rather than the conception of Sir Walter Scott. Such a character as Miss Cushman presented might have had an existence, but of that there is a grave doubt. No one can for a moment question the picturesqueness of the entire performance, the originality of the creation, or the exquisite artistic "make-up," which was in itself a study. I know that she preferred in her latter days, on account of her infirm state of health and her great love for the Shakespearian drama, to abandon this part, as she had years previously abandoned that of the abandoned *Nancy*. But in this respect Miss Cushman could scarcely be looked upon as her own mistress. She had the interest of her managers to consult, and they, be sure, looked constantly to their pockets. Her artistic desires had often to give way to the importunities of the manager for increased nightly receipts. As *Meg* or *Nancy* she would invariably attract an overflowing audience,—as *Lady Macbeth* or *Katherine* a two-thirds house. Pocket therefore was more potent than preference. But the most intense of all her creations was *Nancy*. It was the perfection of realism, and vividly fascinating despite its repulsiveness. Her delineation of this character, in connection with the *Bill Sikes* of William H. Smith, Edward L. Davenport, or John Studley, and the *Fagin* of James W. Wallack the younger, was one of the greatest of dramatic treats. The powerful scenes of

Dickens were no longer a fiction : they became a reality. Of late years Miss Lucille Western made great fame as *Nancy*. She was not without talent ; but oh ! the gulf between her and Charlotte Cushman !

I doubt if there was ever a more conscientious actress known. I do not think she ever took a liberty with her author, — or, in a scene which she controlled, would allow a liberty to be taken by another. A “gag” was her abhorrence. Ever uppermost in her mind were those lines, which should be emblazoned in letters of gold in every green-room of the land : “And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them : for there be of them, that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too : though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered.” In this connection I may say that I was standing at the wing on the stage of the Globe Theatre one day during a rehearsal of “Guy Mannering.” A well known comedian was to play the *Dominie Sampson*. In a scene which he had with *Meg Merrilies* he introduced some new business, which was by no means an improvement on the old. Miss Cushman stopped him at once. “Mr. P——,” said she, “if you have any new business or any gags to introduce in this scene, please reserve them until I have left the stage !”

Miss Cushman was a close and thorough student. There was nothing whatever of the surface actress about her, and the enviable position which she attained was the result of patient, laborious, and intelligent

application. To her latest day she was a student, and as a dramatic scholar she was "a ripe and good one." In conclusion allow me to say — and I bear in mind the great claims of many a gifted actress — that in my estimation Charlotte Cushman, take her for all in all, was the grandest English-speaking actress I ever saw. It may be said of her, as Thomas Campbell so beautifully said of John Philip Kemble : —

"Hers was the spell o'er hearts
Which only acting lends, —
The youngest of the sister arts,
Where all their beauty blends.
For ill can Poetry express
Full many a tone of thought sublime ;
And Painting, mute and motionless,
Steals but a glance of time ;
But, by the mighty Actor brought,
Illusion's perfect triumphs come, —
Verse ceases to be airy thought,
And Sculpture to be dumb."

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